

**An Analysis of the Effects of Explicit Teaching on the Acquisition of  
Structural Discourse Markers in EFL Speaking Classes in Saudi  
Arabia**

**by**

**Budoor Muslim Alraddadi**

A thesis Submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire

February 2019

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## **Abstract**

The study investigates the most appropriate way to teach structural discourse markers (SDMs) and the effect of different treatments on their learning and acquisition. Discourse markers (DMs) play a vital role in spoken language (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Schifffrin (1987) defined them as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (p. 31) and their main function is to “add to discourse coherence” (p. 326). This research focuses on exploring Saudi EFL learners’ use of the target SDMs in oral production (presentations) after explicit instruction, either through a task-based language teaching approach (TBLT) or an inductive/deductive presentation-practice-production (PPP) approach. One of the key justifications of carrying out this research is to contribute to classroom research and to literature on teaching and learning DMs in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) education. Most of the studies in the Saudi EFL context investigate the use and the frequency of DMs, this study attempts to fill in the gap by providing empirical research on the most effective approach to teach SDMs to EFL learners. In addition, this research contributes to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) by examining and providing a description of the effectiveness of different teaching approaches regarding students’ learning and acquisition of the target SDMs in the EFL context, and specifically in Saudi Arabia, where there is currently a gap in research. For this purpose, 49 female learners on their foundation year at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia participated in this study. Furthermore, for the intention of teaching SDMs, learners were divided into three experimental groups, one group was taught using a TBLT approach, the other was introduced to the deductive PPP approach and the last group was taught by using an inductive PPP approach. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (mixed methods) were used. The findings demonstrated that teaching SDMs explicitly by using the three different teaching approaches, helped learners to learn and use the target SDMs in oral presentation (short-term learning).

However, deductive and inductive PPP led to greater use of SDMs and these two groups outperformed the TBLT group. All treatment groups improved and gained DMs from the pre-test to the first delayed test. However, inductive PPP outperformed both TBLT and deductive PPP, consequently it can be said that the inductive PPP approach had more effect on learners' learning and acquisition of SDMs in this specific context.



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## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, my sincere thanks and deep gratitude go to Allah for his help and guidance to complete my doctoral thesis. I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Tania Horak, Dr. Michael Thomas and Dr. Mark Orme for their academic support, extensive knowledge and their helpful feedback. I would like also to say thank you to Dr. Christian Jones who served as my main supervisor for almost two years before he moved to Liverpool University.

I would like to express a special gratitude to many people around me who supported me throughout my PhD journey, thank you to my husband, Bandar Alradadi for his endless support, encouragement, patience, and for being a good listener (to my complaints as well) and best friend. Special thanks to my two lovely kids, Abdullah and Leen. Sincere thanks to my family and family-in-law in Saudi Arabia (my father, mother, sisters and brothers) for their unfailing support and encouragement.

Thanks to all my friends who kept me going through this long process, especially Areej Bayousef and Nadya Aloufi for listening to me, for their advice and for being great friends. Special thanks to all the participants for taking part in my study, without their participation this thesis could not have been completed.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**ANOVA** = Analysis of Variances

**CANCODE** = Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English

**CAQDAS** = Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis

**CEFR** = Common European Framework of References

**CLT** = Communicative Language Teaching

**DM** = Discourse Marker

**DMs** = Discourse Markers

**EFL** = English as a Foreign Language

**ELT** = English Language Teaching

**ESL** = English as a Second Language

**GTM** = Grammar Translation Method

**HE** = Higher Education

**III** = Illustration, Interaction and Induction

**L2** = Second Language.

**NS** = Native Speaker

**NNS** = Non-Native Speaker

**PPP** = Presentation, Practice, Production

**PYP** = Preparatory Year Program

**SDMs** = Structural Discourse Markers

**SLA** = Second Language Acquisition

**SPSS** = Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

**TBLT** = Task-Based Language Teaching

**TFC** = Total Frequency Count

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The reason for undertaking this research is to examine the teaching of structural discourse markers (SDMs) in foundation year English as a foreign language (EFL) classes in a Saudi Arabian higher education institution (HEI), and determine the effectiveness of different teaching methods on learning and using discourse markers (DMs) in planned presentations.

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis. It highlights the aims and justifications of the research in section 1.2, and presents a brief summary of the research background in section 1.3. It also discusses teaching DMs and teaching methods in section 1.4. As this study focuses specifically on Saudi Arabia, the chapter then gives an overview of the educational system in section 1.5. Next, it addresses the research questions in section 1.6. Finally, the chapter outlines the research design and methodology for the study in section 1.7.

### **1.2 Research aims and justifications**

This section presents the research aims and justifications. The study aims to teach DMs to EFL learners specifically to aid them in acquiring certain aspects of language, and using them in their presentations, specifically in sequencing, opening and closing statements, giving examples, showing turning points in speech, and summarizing. Thus, this research focuses on exploring Saudi EFL learners' use of the target DMs in oral production (presentations) after explicit instruction.

The study seeks to investigate the most appropriate ways to teach DMs explicitly in the context of foundation year education in a Saudi Arabian HEI, either through a task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach or an inductive/deductive presentation-practice-production (PPP) approach.

Another key purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the effect of different teaching methods on the learning and acquisition of target DMs, by examining DM usage in learners' oral presentations in a pre-test, post-test, three week delayed test (henceforth 'first delayed test'), and four week delayed test (henceforth second delayed test). Krashen (1981) equated language acquisition to the process of a child developing the mother tongue, which is a subconscious process, unlike language learning which is a conscious process related to the explicit explanation of linguistic rules.

Finally, the study also aims to distinguish the validity and credibility of inductive instruction (inductive PPP and TBLT) versus deductive instruction (deductive PPP) in terms of appropriateness and efficacy in the EFL context. Using a qualitative data collection method, the research seeks to highlight learners' thoughts and experiences regarding the effectiveness of different teaching methods compared to traditional ones, and whether learning and practising DMs is important.

One of the key justifications of carrying out this research is to contribute to literature on teaching and learning DMs in the context of EFL education. Another main objective is to contribute to the effort that has already been made in promoting and improving classroom research in the EFL context. In addition, this research aims to make an original contribution to classroom research by describing and examining the effectiveness of different approaches to teaching, learning and acquisition of the target DMs in the EFL

context, and specifically in Saudi Arabia, where there is currently a gap in research. Most of the studies have investigated the use and frequency of DMs, whereas this study attempts to fill in the gap by providing empirical research on the most effective method to teach DMs to EFL learners. Al-Yaari et al, (2013) and Algouzi (2014) argued that, exploring the use of DMs by Saudi EFL learners is insufficient in supporting language skills development. The investigation of the most appropriate way to teach DMs and the effect of different treatments on learning and acquisition will uncover the extent to which method works better with Saudi EFL learners.

This study is also significant for the participants as well as EFL teachers because it seeks to raise awareness of the importance of teaching, learning and using DMs, and highlight their structural function in discourse. The materials used in this research are authentic/supplementary, which enable learners to have more freedom to talk about topics and at the same time practice presentation skills in a more open and friendly classroom; and this is of significance to teachers, policy makers and educators.

It also gives a detailed description of learners' perceptions of the learning of DMs, their attempts to understand and explain the methods used by EFL teachers in their usual classroom practices, and whether these are different from the researcher's teaching methods.

### **1.3 Research Background**

According to Levinson (1983),

there are many words and phrases in English, and no doubt most languages, which indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. Examples are utterance-initial usages of but, therefore, in conclusion, to the contrary, still,

however, anyway, well, besides, actually, all in all, so, after all, and so on. (pp. 87-88)

Levinson (1983) did not name these words and phrases. However, it can be seen that they have a function in discourse structures by indicating the relationship between utterances and organizing the speech. Furthermore, DMs are frequently and commonly used to refer to these words and phrases by many scholars (Schiffrin, 1985, Brinton, 1990, Blackmore, 2002; Fuller, 2003, Müller, 2005, Fung and Carter, 2007).

A large and growing number of studies have investigated the use of DMs, most of which have examined their frequency of use by non-native speakers (NNS) and compared this to their use by native speakers (NS) (e.g. Fung & Carter, 2007). The studies have broadly reached the same conclusions, that DMs are more frequent in native-speaker speech than in NNS speech. However, Fung and Carter (2007) noted out “limited research has been undertaken on the range and variety of DMs used in spoken English by second and foreign language speakers” (p. 410). Müller (2004) also observed that research in second language acquisition (SLA) has neglected the area of DMs, and that few studies have been carried out in this field. As such, this study focuses on teaching DMs in an EFL context.

Carter and McCarthy (2006) stated that DMs play a significant role in interactions. Most studies on DMs in EFL learning have investigated their production and frequency in comparison to their use by NS (e.g. Fung & Carter, 2007, Hellermann & Vergun, 2007). Some studies have concentrated on specific DMs, such as those conducted by Hellermann and Vergun (2007) and Adolph and Carter (2003). Other studies have focused on the effects of teaching DMs on language skills in EFL contexts, such as Sadeghi and Heidaryan (2012) who explored DMs in relation to EFL learners’ listening



comprehension, and Aidinlou and Shahrokhi mehr (2012), who investigated teaching DMs for writing skills. In addition, some classroom research has investigated the effects of explicit vs. implicit DM instruction in different contexts (e.g. Rahimi & Riasati, 2012; Yoshimi, 2001), finding that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit. To summarise, most of the studies reviewed for this research have focused on the use and frequency of DMs, and compared NNS with NS; they have found that NS are likely to use more DMs in their speech than NNS, and that explicit teaching is the most effective way to teach DMs in order for learners to notice and use them.

This study focuses on EFL in Saudi Arabia because there is a related gap in the research that necessitates investigation in this context. As Rahimi and Riasati (2012) have observed, despite the considerable body of studies on DMs, “there is a paucity of research on the acquisition of English DMs by EFL learners” (p. 74).

#### **1.4 Teaching discourse markers and teaching methods**

Fung and Carter (2007) argued “discourse markers serve as useful interactional manoeuvres to structure and organize speech” (p.410) and determined their functions as: interpersonal, structural, cognitive, and referential. Furthermore, according to Jones (2010) there are many reasons for teaching DMs explicitly, including their frequency, usefulness, multifunctionality, lack of salience, and implicit testing. This study focuses on SDMs as they are useful in planned presentations. Fung and Carter (2007), point out:

Markers in the structural category provide information about the ways in which successive units of talk are linked to each other and how a sequence of verbal activities, the opening, closing, transition, and continuation of topics, are organized and managed. (p. 420)

Therefore, it is worth teaching SDMs explicitly in this context because of their usefulness to learners in organising oral presentations (see sub-section 2.4.1 for the rationale to focus on SDMs). Accordingly, they were chosen and taught to help learners to use them in organizing their presentation. Indeed, in the Saudi Arabian context, Al-wossabi (2014) argues that introducing DMs might raise learners' awareness towards using them in their oral production (see section 2.8).

This study investigates the application of three approaches: task-based-language teaching approach (TBLT), a deductive PPP approach, and inductive PPP for teaching specific DMs to Saudi EFL students; and examines the differences between them in terms of their effects on presentation output. The reason for the selection of these specific methods is that Saudi EFL learners are not usually exposed to English outside their classes, so learners have to practise the spoken language more effectively within the classroom. In addition, learners need to improve their oral presentation skills because this is one of the course objectives on which they will be assessed in the preparatory year program (PYP) (foundation year) and is a requirement to complete the program successfully (Taibah.edu.sa).

Three teaching methods are employed in this study: a TBLT approach, a deductive presentation-practice-production approach, and an inductive PPP approach. In addition, applying these approaches provides a great opportunity to compare the different ways of planning lessons, and determine which framework is more effective. The PPP approach underpins the skills-building model (Anderson, 1982) and the output hypothesis (Swain 1985), while TBLT underpins the interaction (Long, 1996) and output hypotheses. Furthermore, the cognitive theory of language learning is discussed as the study focused on different types of explicit instruction.

In the last few decades, teaching EFL has changed enormously, and current English language teaching (ELT) methodologies and approaches, such as TBLT, deductive PPP and inductive PPP, focus on the importance of giving learners opportunities to communicate (Ellis, 2008). In the following subsections, these approaches are highlighted briefly and will be discussed further in Chapter 2 (sections 2.8.1 and 2.8.2).

TBLT and learning was developed by Prabhu (1987) in southern India, to help learners communicate and use the target language by carrying out tasks, in this case considered opportunities for effective interaction. Richards and Schmidt (2010) define TBLT as “a teaching approach based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the central units for the planning and delivery of instruction. Such tasks are said to provide an effective basis for language learning” (p. 585). Willis (1996) identified three stages in TBLT: “Pre-task (introduction of the topic and the task), Task cycle (task, planning, report) and Language focus (analysis and practice)” (pp. 56-57).

A growing body of research has focused on TBLT and learning in different settings (Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996; Bygate et al., 2001; Ellis, 2000 & 2003; Carless, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2012; Nunan, 2005; Littlewood, 2007; Van Den Branden, 2006; Willis & Willis, 2007). Furthermore, some scholars (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Long & Crookes, 1992) have argued that TBLT evolved as a result of the limitations and inadequacies of the PPP approach and is generally considered a development of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach rather than a new movement (Nunan, 2004; Littlewood, 2004; Richards, 2005). As indicated above, the primary focus of TBLT is on communicative tasks, which are the main aspect of the learning cycle. According to Plonsky and Kim (2016), “In the last two decades, tasks have been used by numerous researchers to elicit learner production” (p. 73).

Like any other teaching approaches, TBLT has its supporters and its opponents. For instance, Littlewood (2007) delineated five main concerns related to using TBLT in a foreign language context: classroom management, avoidance of English, minimal demands on language competence, incompatibility with public assessment demands, and conflict with educational values and traditions. More recent classroom research that has examined the implementation of TBLT in classroom settings also confirms these concerns and has identified many problems that hinder its application, and many challenges related to classroom management, educational cultures, teachers' perceptions, and learner awareness (Lai & Lin, 2015). However, despite the objections and criticism TBLT has received, it has a number of advantages, such as engaging students in real-life tasks and using learners' motivation (See section 2.8.2 for more details).

The PPP approach is a well-established and long-established teaching approach (Skehan, 1998; Willis, 2004). Richards and Rodgers (2001) defined it as “a detailed set of sequential steps to follow in the classroom” (p. 246). The sequencing of a typical PPP lesson is illustrated below (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 447-448):

- **Presentation:** the introduction of new items, when their meanings are explained, demonstrated, and other necessary information is given.
- **Practice:** new items are practised, either individually or in groups. Practice activities usually move from controlled to less controlled practice.
- **Production:** students use the new items more freely, with less or little control by the teacher.

The first stage (presentation) focuses on introducing the new items, the second stage (practice) focuses on practising the new items in controlled exercise, while the third stage (production) focuses on producing the language in freer exercise.

Thornbury (2006) provided a lesson structure of PPP in which

a pre-selected grammar item is first presented to the learners, e.g. by means of a text or through demonstration. (...) Its rules of form and use are either explained or elicited from the learners. The item is then practised in isolation, and with an emphasis on accuracy. Teacher control is gradually relinquished, and activities (...) are set up to encourage free production. (p. 172)

Furthermore, the PPP approach underpins Anderson's (1982) skill-building theory, which has three common stages identified by DeKeyser (1998): the cognitive, associative and autonomous stages. In this study, both inductive and deductive techniques are used in the implementation of the PPP approach. In deductive PPP, the teacher presents, explains the new items and gives examples, while in inductive PPP, the teacher presents the new items elicited from learners. Although PPP is a clear, simple, and attractive way of teaching and practising the target language, it has been widely criticized. Despite the fact that there are many doubts concerning the approach and its usefulness in the classroom, it is still a popular framework, and is widely used because of its simplicity and the clear sequences for both teachers and learners (see section 2.8.1 for more details on PPP approach).

### **1.5 Teaching in Saudi Arabia**

English language courses are only compulsory for students in intermediate and secondary public school. Despite studying English for six years, most Saudi EFL students leave school with limited English language skills. McMullen (2014) notes, "students themselves believe they leave high school without the English skills necessary to enter their academic majors" (p.138). Accordingly, this may be one of the reasons why the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia decided to introduce English from grade four in public primary schools. Alkhuzay (2015) noted "teaching English language to Saudi

children will open up new opportunities for their future because [younger] children have [an] innate ability to learn language quickly as compared to older children” (p.366).

Furthermore, teaching of EFL in HE in Saudi Arabia has developed over the past five years, and there is now more focus on teaching students language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Historically, the focus was mainly on teaching grammar and vocabulary, to the detriment of classroom interaction. At the beginning of each semester, students in the foundation programme take an English language test to determine their English language level. Based on this, they are assigned to one of three different classes: beginner, intermediate, or upper-intermediate. They must complete all levels by the end of the academic year. Giving presentations is one of the assessment criteria in the foundation year and learners are expected to give a presentation in speaking classes. Students should prepare a presentation on the basis of the unit topic. Sometimes the teacher gives them time to prepare this in the class, or they may be asked to prepare it later and present it in the following class.

However, students in the Saudi context are not taught presentation skills and how to organise and manage the discourse, and the main focus is on the topic content and using the new vocabulary. Furthermore, there is no clear method that teachers follow in teaching spoken skills, if they are taught at all. Instead, most of the classes are predominantly teacher-fronted and focus on the acquisition of vocabulary, writing and reading skills. According to Wilson and Brooks (2014), the majority of L2 classes in Saudi Arabia are taken up by drilling activities. They argue that one of the ways to convert classes into learner-centred lessons is by teaching oral presentation skills. In sum, it appears that teaching oral presentation skills enhances L2 classes, and promotes communicative learning by giving learners the opportunity to discuss, prepare and

rehearse their group presentation before presenting it in front of the class. Therefore, in order to help learners' develop their speaking skills, EFL classes should be learner-centred and learners should be introduced to presentation skills.

As indicated above, Saudi students at the foundation level are required to give presentations, and these should become more coherent and organised as learners progress academically. The use of DMs could be very useful in this regard, as they may help students to organise their presentations, as well as enable listeners to follow them more easily.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies related to DM teaching methods in the Saudi context and therefore this study fills a gap and contributes to the existing research. However, in the English as a second language (ESL) context, one study conducted by Jones (2009) employed two explicit teaching methods: PPP and a language awareness (LA) approach. Thus, the intention from conducting this study is to teach SDMs as a focus of oral presentations in the classroom, applying three teaching approaches, TBLT, deductive and inductive PPP, and compare the outcomes to determine which is more effective in the Saudi context.

The decision to investigate DMs in the Saudi EFL context has been influenced by my own interests and experiences as an EFL learner in the Saudi context where there was no focus on spoken skills in the lessons. The selection of the three teaching methods has been informed by the findings of a pilot study, which revealed that TBLT worked better than deductive PPP. As a result, the researcher decided to include an inductive PPP approach in this study to determine whether using inductive approaches (inductive PPP as well as

TBLT) has a more positive impact on teaching DMs than a deductive approach (deductive PPP).

### **1.6 Research Questions**

The study was undertaken in two different stages: the pilot study which served as a basis for the main study. Based on the findings of the pilot study, a number of changes were made by adding a third experimental group to the study design and a qualitative method of data collection method to support the findings from the quantitative measures. Consequently, different research questions have been identified for both stages of this study.

The pilot study primarily sought to answer the following questions for the MPhil stage.

1. To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi EFL higher education context help students to learn and use them effectively?
2. Which teaching method has a greater impact upon acquisition (PPP or TBLT)?

The main study sought to answer the questions below for the PhD stage:

1. To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi English as a Foreign Language higher education context help students to learn and use them in their presentation?
2. Which teaching approach, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive), or TBLT has a long-term effect on the acquisition of structural discourse markers?
3. To what extent do Saudi EFL learners consider learning structural discourse markers via TBLT, deductive PPP, or inductive PPP more useful than traditional teaching methods?



## **1.7 Research design and methodology**

The research questions were answered through experimental classroom research conducted on three groups studying at the foundation level at Taibah University for women. All groups were taught the same DMs, but through three different teaching approaches: TBLT, deductive PPP, and inductive PPP.

The sources of primary data for this study consist of i) transcripts of learners' presentations, ii) transcripts of interviews with students, and iii) transcripts of students' written feedback. The study assesses three classes of female EFL learners in the foundation year of Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. The participants are aged between 18 and 20 years old and at the upper intermediate level, and all are taking the course in English for Academic Purposes. These three classes comprise the three experimental groups, one of which was taught using TBLT, another using deductive PPP, and the last using inductive PPP. Of these students, some were asked to volunteer and participate in semi-structured interviews. In addition, all students were requested to complete anonymous written feedback to gather data about their perceptions of the teaching method employed, whether they find it useful or not, and the reasons for this.

A mixed methods approach was adopted "to achieve fuller understanding of a target phenomenon" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 164), in this case, the use of DMs in presentations as well as learners' opinions about learning and practising DMs, and teaching methods from interviews. According to Dörnyei (2007), "over the past 15 years, mixed methods research has been increasingly seen as a third approach in research methodology" (p. 42). A mixed methods approach has enabled me to answer the research questions by triangulating the findings from both quantitative and qualitative methods. Triangulation of the findings was used in the first and third research question to establish the

corroboration between both sets of data. In addition, using mixed methods has helped me in understanding the research problem in more detail and ensured that the study is as coherent and as comprehensive as possible from both a theoretical and a practical perspective.

Students' presentations pre-test, post-test, and two delayed tests were recorded and transcribed, providing a corpus of student data. The transcripts of the presentations were analysed quantitatively using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences descriptive statistics software) to establish which DMs are used and how frequently. Interviews were analysed qualitatively to determine the usefulness of learning and practising DMs and teaching methods, based on four students' responses to interview questions. Jones (2009) argued that to establish "how effective a particular type of explicit teaching is (...) we also need to ask the learners who are experiencing the instruction what they think about its effectiveness" (p. 87). The interview transcripts and the written feedback were analysed qualitatively to establish participants' views of the impact of the instruction on their learning and presentation skills. The sources of data and modes of analysis are summarised below in relation to the research questions.

<b>Research question(s)</b>	<b>Source(s) of data</b>	<b>Data analysis</b>
RQ1	Presentation transcripts/ interviews data	Quantitative analysis of mean scores of DMs.  Qualitative analysis of students' perceptions of the usefulness of learning and practising SDMs when giving presentations.
RQ2	Presentation transcripts	Quantitative analysis of the gain scores of DMs.
RQ3	Interview data/written feedback data	Qualitative analysis of students' perceptions of the usefulness of teaching methods.

**Table 1:** Sources of data and modes of analysis

## **1.8 Summary**

This chapter highlighted the aims and objectives of carrying out this research, and presented the potential research contributions. It also provided an overview of the background of research in DMs, and identified some studies which have been conducted in relation to their use, frequency or the teaching. Furthermore, the EFL teaching environment in Saudi Arabia was outlined as the context in which the study will take place, because this will provide an understanding of the nature of EFL teaching overall. Then, a detailed description of the research questions for both the MPhil stage and the PhD stage of the research were provided. Finally, the chapter described the research design and the proposed methodology.

This thesis begins with the literature review (Chapter 2), reports the pilot study in (Chapter 3), and moves on to describe and justify the methodology (Chapter 4) and the overall framework used for the research. Then, Chapter 5 presents the quantitative data findings, and Chapter 6 reviews the qualitative data findings. The quantitative and the qualitative results are reported and discussed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 reviews the research findings, outlines the research contributions, limitations, and finally provides some recommendations for future study.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter establishes the theoretical framework of the study. First, it gives a brief overview of the key terms adopted in this study in section 2.2. It highlights spoken grammar and theoretical approaches to DMs in section 2.3 and provides definitions of DMs and the target SDMs in section 2.4. It then provides an overview of the characteristics of DMs in section 2.5. Then, SLA theories, the input hypothesis, output hypotheses, the interaction hypothesis and the skill-building theory, are outlined in section 2.6. Teaching English in the Saudi EFL context is explained in section 2.7. The three teaching methods employed in this study are critically examined in section 2.8. Finally, the key studies on DMs are reviewed in section 2.9.

### **2.2 Definitions of key terms**

In this section, the definitions of key terms, method, approach, learning, instruction, traditional methods of deductive and inductive teaching, and explicit and implicit learning and teaching are highlighted.

Method refers to “a system for the teaching of a language that is based either on a theory of language or a particular theory of learning or (usually) both” (Thornbury, 2006, p. 131) whereas an approach “denotes a more general theoretical orientation”, than a method, which is “just one way that the approach is realized in practice” (p. 131). Many researchers have used the term ‘method’ as “a general word to describe classroom practices, such as classroom management” (p. 131). In addition, classroom methodology refers to a way of organizing and structuring lessons used in both TBLT and PPP processes in broader CLT. However, as many scholars refer to TBLT and PPP as

approaches (Sato, 2009; Carless, 2009), in this thesis the term ‘approach’ is used to describe both TBLT and PPP.

Learning is defined as “the process by which change in behaviour, knowledge, skills, etc., comes about through practice, instruction or experience and the result of such a process” (Richards and Schmidt, 2010) whereas instruction is “detailed information about how something should be done or operated” (*Oxford Dictionary of English* (2010) defines instruction as p.906).

The term ‘traditional teaching method’ is used throughout the thesis. Li and Edwards (2017) state that traditional methods “rely heavily on a notion of language teaching that emphasizes knowledge transmission (e.g., vocabulary and grammatical structures) and in which teachers closely follow a prescribed, authoritative textbook” (p. 375).

Inductive and deductive teaching are two different teaching techniques. In the former, “learners are not taught the grammatical or other types of rules directly but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language” (Richards and Schmidt, 2010: p. 158). Deductive teaching is “an approach to language teaching in which learners are taught rules and given specific information about a language” (2010: p. 158). Both inductive and deductive techniques are used in the implementation of the PPP approach.

It is essential to define explicit and implicit learning. For instance, Richards and Schmidt (2002) defined explicit learning as when “the learner is aware of what has been learned” (p. 250). According to Brown (2006), explicit learning includes “input processing to find out whether the input information contains regularities, and if so, to work out the concepts

and rules with which these regularities can be captured” (p. 291). So, the purpose of explicit teaching is to give learners direct information (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). In contrast, implicit learning has been defined as “learning without conscious attention or awareness” (Brown, 2006, p. 291). Thus, the purpose of implicit teaching, as explained by Burns and Mason (2002), is to give learners instruction by providing them with various examples and without teaching grammatical rules.

### **2.3 Spoken grammar and theoretical approaches to discourse markers**

Recent studies in corpus linguistics have examined specific aspects of spoken grammar. According to McCarthy and Carter (2001), “Spoken grammars have uniquely special qualities that distinguish them from written ones” (p. 1). There are many elements of spoken grammar, including:

- DMs, e.g. “I mean”, “I see”, “OK”, “well”, “right”;
- ellipsis, e.g. “... got an awful cold” (ellipsis of “I’ve”);
- vague language, e.g. “kind of”, “or something”, as in “Can you get me a sandwich or something?”
- heads, e.g. “Clare, she’s a really good actress”;
- tails, e.g. “She’s a really good actress, Clare”;
- back-channelling, e.g. “mm”, “yeah”, “oh”;
- hesitation, e.g. “err”, “umm”;
- response tokens, e.g. “I see”;
- lexical chunks, e.g. “You know what I mean”.

(Carter & McCarthy, 1995, 1997, 2006; McCarthy & Carter, 1995)

According to Fung and Carter (2007), the frequency of DM use in spoken discourse is significant in comparison to its use in other forms of language. Similarly, Schiffrin

(1987), Maschler (1998), and Fraser (1999) agree that DMs act as influential interactional features rather than having a purely grammatical function. Indeed, one of the most important features of using DMs is to constitute and organise talk.

One of the theoretical frameworks used in relation to DMs is systemic functional grammar (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), DMs are connective devices with a variety of functions as well as meanings in segment structuring. The researchers divided the functions related to DMs into five main categories: reference, substitution, conjunction, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion. However, in *Cohesion in English*, Halliday and Hasan (1976) did not use the term DM directly, but rather referred to ‘sentence connectives’, and analysed certain words, such as ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘I mean’ and their functions in written texts (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

Schiffrin et al (2003) critiqued Halliday and Hasan’s study, noting its focus on written texts. Nevertheless, it highlights the significant role of DMs in both functional and semantic organization. In addition, Blakemore (2002) argued that Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) assertion that DMs “encode structural relationships between segments of text or discourse ... seems at odds with their insistence that ‘a text is [a] unit of language in use’ [original emphasis] rather than a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence” (2002, p. 152). This, Blakemore explained, is perhaps because: “although Halliday and Hasan do not think of a text as a grammatical unit, they do assume that there is a system of rules which relate linguistically patterns of connection – that is *cohesion* – with texts in exactly the same way as a grammar is said to pair sounds and meanings” (pp. 152-153).

The second theoretical approach in relation to DMs is the coherence model (Schiffrin, 1987), in which coherence is defined as “the outcomes of joint efforts from interactants

to integrate knowledge, meaning, saying and doing” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 29). He used the coherence framework to identify 11 DMs, including: well, I mean, y’know, now, then. (1987) and Schiffrin is considered the first scholar to have noted the significance of DMs. Indeed, Fraser (1999) contended that Schiffrin’s study was “the first and the most detailed effort” in the field (p. 933) based on coherence theory. According to Schiffrin “markers index the location of an utterance within its emerging local contexts” (1987, p. 315) and their main function is to “add to discourse coherence” (p. 326), because they aid in “understanding speech and information progression and facilitate speakers’ comprehension by creating a smooth and spontaneous interaction between them” (p. 31). Therefore, as Fraser (1990) noted, Schiffrin viewed “discourse markers as serving an integrative function in discourse and thus contributing to discourse coherence. ... as a kind of ‘discourse glue’” (p. 385). Thus, according to Fung and Carter, (2007) and Schiffrin, (1987) DMs could be considered contextual coordinates within utterances and can be located on the following five planes: exchange structure, ideational structure, action structure, participation framework, and information state.

The main weakness of Schiffrin’s (1987) study was the limited focus on only 11 DMs. Redeker (1991) critiqued Schiffrin’s work and argued that “what is needed is a clearer definition of the component of discourse coherence and a broader framework that embraces all connective expressions and is not restricted to an arbitrary selected subset” (p. 1167). In addition, she believed that the term “discourse operator” is more appropriate than “discourse marker”, as it has a more pragmatic meaning. Thus, she proposed the following definition:

A discourse operator is a word or phrase – for instance, a conjunction, adverbial, comment clause, interjection – that is uttered with the primary function of bringing the listener’s attention to a particular kind of linkage of the upcoming utterance



with the immediate discourse context. An utterance in this definition is an intonationally and structurally bounded, usually clausal unit. (Redeker, 1991, p. 1168)

Another limitation of Schiffrin's (1987) research is that it did not consider the functions of DMs (except in the coherence of discourse). Instead, it addressed them as linguistic entities, based heavily on the descriptive framework of DMs. An additional important study is that conducted by Fraser (1996, 1999), who researched DMs from a pragmatic perspective. He identified two main DM categories:

1. DMs which relate to messages:
2. Contrastive: (al)though, but, contrary to this/that, conversely, despite doing this/that, etc.
3. Collateral: above all, also, besides, etc.
4. Inferential: accordingly, as a result, thus, consequently, etc.
5. Additional subclasses: after all, since, because, etc.
6. DMs which relate to topics, such as: back to the original topic, to return to my topic, by the way, just to update you, etc. (Fraser, 1999, pp. 946-950)

Like Schiffrin (1987), Fraser (1999) based his study on a descriptive framework of DMs, arguing that each DM has "a core meaning which is procedural not conceptual" and that DMs connect two segments in utterances (the second segment with the first segment) (Fraser, 1999 p. 950).

The third approach to the exploration of DMs is the relevance theory applied by Blakemore (2002), based on Sperber and Wilson (1995). In an earlier paper, Blakemore (1987) referred to DMs as "semantic constraints on relevance" (p. 141); thus, they "indicate exactly how the relevance of one proposition is dependent on the interpretation

of another” (cited in Archakis, 2001, p. 1238). Another work by Blakemore (1992) adopted relevance theory from a pragmatic point of view and suggested three ways in which DMs could construct utterance relevance: “It may allow the derivation of a contextual implication (e.g. so, therefore) ... strengthen an existing assumption” (e.g. after all, besides, moreover, furthermore) ... [and] contradict an existing assumption ... (e.g. however, but)” (pp. 137-142). Within this framework, according to Jucker (1993):

every act of communication comes with a guarantee of its own relevance, that is to say, a speaker, by making an utterance, makes the claim that it will be worthwhile to process this utterance. There will be a maximal effect, in cognitive terms, for a minimal effort in terms of processing cost. The more information an individual can get out of an utterance the more relevant it will be; and the higher the processing effort needed the smaller the relevance (p. 436).

Blakemore also suggested that “discourse connectives” are used to demonstrate how one segment of the discourse is relevant to and based on another, and that these markers “impose constraints on relevance by virtue of the inferential connections they express” (1987, p. 141). In addition, they promote the hearer’s processing in determining relevance (Blakemore, 1987):

This means that in a coherent discourse, two utterances may be connected either by virtue of the fact that the interpretation of the first includes propositions that are used in establishing the relevance of the second, or by virtue of the fact that a proposition conveyed by one is affected by the interpretation of the other. In either case the relevance of the one is dependent on the interpretation of the other. (p. 122)

In this way, Blakemore (2002) provided a clear overview (Chapters 3–5) of relevance theory and the distinction between semantics and pragmatics, as well as between explicit

and implicit content and the connection between relevance and linguistic form. Relevance theory is linked to pragmatic theory, and Blakemore (2002) argued “the theoretic relevance approach to pragmatics comes with a view of semantics attached” (p. 59). This leads to considerations of relevance and discourse, particularly coherence and the function(s) of DMs in relevance theory terms. Blakemore (2002) asserted that DMs or connectives can be defined according to the role they play “in ‘marking’ [the] structural relations between segments, and the key to their analysis lies in the classification of the kinds of relations that exist between text segments” (p. 152).

Having provided an overview of spoken grammar and the theoretical approaches to DMs, the following section will shed light on the different definitions of DMs.

#### **2.4 Definitions of discourse markers**

The subject of DMs has been studied from different perspectives, such as pragmatics and linguistics. Perhaps for this reason, as Jucker and Ziv (1998) stated, “there is no generally agreed upon definition of the term ‘discourse marker’” (p. 1), and the same holds true for their functions. Nonetheless, researchers have acknowledged that DMs have a pragmatic meaning in discourse, and consequently play a significant role in speakers’ practical competence (Müller, 2005). The following paragraph presents a number of definitions from different perspectives.

Schiffrin (1987) defined DMs as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (p. 31). From a pragmatic perspective, Fraser (1999) referred to them as “a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases” (p. 931). However, from a linguistic perspective, Müller (2004) argued that DMs are “linguistic elements which are, as a group, difficult

to place within a traditional word class. They are syntactically optional and contribute little or no propositional meaning to the utterance that contains them” (p. 1158). Despite that, DMs play a vital role in spoken language, and can be defined simply as linguistic expressions (Carter & McCarthy, 2006).

Although the commonly used term “discourse marker” (Schiffrin 1987) is adopted in this study, different labels or terms, informed by the various research perspectives are also used, such as pragmatic markers (Brinton, 1996; Fraser, 1996), sentence connectives (Halliday & Hasan 1976), discourse connectives (Blakemore, 1987, 2002), discourse particles (Aijmer, 2002; Goldberg, 1980), and pragmatic expressions (Erman, 1987). As a result, Jucker and Ziv (1998) described them as a “fuzzy concept” (p. 2). Fung and Carter (2007) proposed a multi-categorical model comprising four categories, each of which described a function: interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive. The following paragraph highlights the DMs proposed for this study.

As students in the Saudi context are expected to give a presentation as part of their studies, this investigation focuses on the structural function of DMs. The following sub-section provides a rationale for the decision to focus on SDMs and highlights the target SDMs and their function in this study.

#### **2.4.1 Structural discourse markers**

As the focus of this study is on teaching and practising SDMs, this sub-section provides a brief rationale on their “usefulness” (Jones 2010). Fung and Carter (2007) explain that SDMs are used to “orientate and organize the discourse in progress and signal links and transitions between topics” (p. 435). The target SDMs were selected on the basis of the usefulness of their structural function which is compatible with giving oral presentations.

Indeed, some of the target DMs were drawn from Fung and Carter's (2007) work in helping learners in structuring their presentations for instance, sequencing events, moving from one topic to another, and giving examples. Lewis (1993) argued that, a teacher's intuition plays a vital role when choosing which words should be focused on, accordingly, I also added further DMs, which could help learners in structuring introductions to summarising the topic. This functionality can be illustrated by words such as *now* and *so*, which are flexible resources of interaction, used for marking talk boundaries, changing topic and summarising (Fung & Carter, 2007); *so* can be used for shifting (signalling the end of a topic and start of a new topic) or summarising.

It can be said that SDMs may aid students in structuring their speech, such as opening and closing conversations and sequencing points in a presentation in order to help them in organising it; a number of target DMs proposed for this study are drawn from Fung and Carter (2007), as shown in Table 2.

Function	English discourse marker
Sequencing	First, second, next, then, finally
Opening and Closing topic	Now, OK, right, well, let's start OK, Right
Giving examples	For example, like
Topic shifts	So, now, well, let's turn to, let's move on to
Summarizing opinions	So, to conclude

(Source: Fung & Carter, 2007, p. 418)

**Table 2:** Target SDMs

Furthermore, this study follows the suggestion proposed by Hernández (2013), who considered a DM effective “if it contributed to structuring and sequencing of information” (pp. 19-20). In line with that Fung and Carter (2007) noted:

Markers in the structural category provide information about the ways in which successive units of talk are linked to each other and how a sequence of verbal activities, the opening, closing, transition, and continuation of topics, are organized and managed. (p. 420).

It can therefore be argued that teaching SDMs to EFL learners is important, because they help convey both the ideas as well as attitude of the speaker. In addition, “they contribute to building the local coherence which is jointly constructed by speaker and hearer in their discourse structure, context, meaning and action during interaction” (Castro, 2009, p. 59). Furthermore, Brown and Yule (1983) argued that structural markers symbolize optional signals, and that using such markers helps speakers organise their speech or what they want to talk about. Brinton (1996) claimed that if DMs are omitted, speech will be grammatically acceptable but may “be judged ‘unnatural’, ‘awkward’, ‘disjointed’, ‘impolite’, ‘unfriendly’ or ‘dogmatic’ within the communicative context” (pp. 35-36). Fraser (1990) also argued that DMs are highly beneficial guides for explaining the intention of the speakers in communication, and omitting them from the discourse may lead to a breakdown in communication.

This study focuses on the structural function of DMs, as stated by Fung and Carter (2007), and their usefulness as indicated by Jones (2009), to aid students in structuring their speech, for example, opening and closing topics and sequencing points in a presentation.

## 2.5 Characteristics of discourse markers

Despite the variations in terminology and definitions, most DMs share certain characteristics as listed in the following table.

Characteristic	Source(s)
Occur often in turn-initial positions	Fung and Carter (2007)
Exhibit multi-functionality	Schiffrin (1987), Maschler (1994), Aijmer (2002), Fung and Carter (2007), Jones (2009)
In spoken discourse, DMs have four key functions: structural, interpersonal, cognitive, and referential	(Aijmer, 2002; Fung & Carter, 2007; Jones, 2009; Maschler, 1994).
Are multi-grammatical	Fung and Carter (2007)
Have no propositional meaning	Schiffrin (1987), Fraser (1999), Müller (2004), Fung and Carter (2007)
Are optional	Schiffrin (1987), Brinton (1996), Müller (2004), Fung and Carter (2007)
Represent a separate tone unit in prosody	Schiffrin (1987), Fung and Carter (2007)

**Table 3:** Summary of the characteristics of DMs

1. They tend to occur in turn-initial positions, for example as a signal for attention (Fung & Carter, 2007), or to signal a change, as in:

“**Right.** That’s the end of that little section.” (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE) cited in Fung & Carter, 2007, p. 412).

However, the position of some DMs is flexible, and studies of individual DMs have shown that they also appear in medial and final positions (Keller, 1979, cited in Brinton, 1996). A DM may be used in a medial position to explain meaning or hold the floor. The final position is less frequent and tends to be used for and understood as clarification (I mean), comments (I think) and afterthought (actually), for example:

“But ah since it’s for children, this can’t be too high the price, **I mean.**” (Student corpus) (Fung & Carter, 2007, p. 413)

2. They demonstrate multi-functionality. Schiffrin (1987) noted that a DM “has to be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse, and on different planes of

discourse” (p. 328).

3. In spoken discourse, DMs have four key functions: structural, interpersonal, cognitive, and referential (Aijmer, 2002; Fung & Carter, 2007; Jones, 2009; Maschler, 1994).
4. They are multi-grammatical, because they “are drawn from different grammatical and lexical inventories” (Fung & Carter, 2007, p. 413), such as coordinate conjunctions (and, but, or), prepositional phrases (by the way), or adverbs (actually).
5. They have no propositional meaning (Fraser, 1999; Fung & Carter, 2007; Müller, 2004; Schiffrin, 1987). However, discourse connectives have a procedural or pragmatic meaning rather than representational meaning (Fraser & Blakemore, 2002).

They are optional (Aijmer, 2004; Brinton, 1996; Fung and Carter, 2007; Schiffrin, 1987). Schiffrin (1987) and Brinton (1996) claimed that as using DMs is optional, they can be removed from the discourse. Similarly, Fung and Carter (2007) claimed that omitting DMs does not affect the discourse grammatically or semantically, yet they have an important function. Indeed, Fung and Carter (2007) observed that the omission of the DMs in the following example would mean that the “stance and attitude of the speaker would not be properly signalled” (p. 414):

**“Well actually** there’s a couple of things **really** ... I need to ask you about one draft of my medieval my history of English.” (CANCODE cited in Fung & Carter, 2007, p. 414)

6. They often demonstrate prosodic features, having the properties of a “separate tone unit” (Fung & Carter, 2007, p. 413). According to Schiffrin (1987), for a DM to be used as a marker, it “has to have a range of prosodic contours” (p. 328).

## **2.6 English language teaching and second language acquisition theories**

This section provides an overview of aspects of SLA theory, cognitive theory, the input hypothesis, the output hypothesis and the interaction hypothesis, all of which inform the



teaching methods of the current researcher. This section also highlights the impact of these theories on the ELT methodologies adopted in this study.

### **2.6.1 The cognitive theory of language learning**

The cognitive theory of language learning is a key aspect of this research as the study focuses on different types of explicit instruction (inductive and deductive) which involves a variety of cognitive and mental processes. Before investigating further, the role of cognitive theory in language acquisition, a number of key definitions need to be explained. Richards and Schmidt (2010) defined cognitive theory as “a theory that describes phenomena in terms of mental constructs in the mind of individuals” (p.93). With regard to cognitive theory in linguistics, Richards and Schmidt (2010) define it as “the interaction between language and cognition” (p.91). It can be said that cognition in SLA is about using the language through interaction to understand ideas, experiences and feelings, convey meaning to others and organise ideas. So, learners use their current knowledge to understand new knowledge. This view is supported by Lashri et al (2013) who noted that cognitive engagement involves a connection between the current new knowledge and the previous knowledge

The focus of cognitive theory is on “the conceptualization of students’ learning processes and address[es] the issues of how information is received, organised, stored and retrieved by the mind” (Ertmer & Newby, 2013, p. 51). Furthermore, there are a number of cognitive strategies which may enhance learning, such as repeating words or phrases (rehearsal) and organizing (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). The cognitive theory of learning focuses on encouraging learners to use suitable learning strategies (Ertmer & Newby: 2013). In the current study, learners are involved in a number of cognitive strategies, such as discussing the topic, organizing ideas, writing, rehearsing and

presenting their presentation, which may have an effect on their learning of the target DMs.

Sharwood Smith (1981) claimed that explicit instruction could help EFL adult learners as they have “increased cognitive maturity” (p.165). In line with this claim and as the main focus of this study is on explicit instruction, adult learners could use their existing old knowledge as a strategy to learn the new knowledge and, ultimately, promote learning and acquisition of the new items. N. Ellis (2005) for example, argued that there is a correlation between effective explicit learning and the depth and the elaboration of the cognitive processes. Kalpper (2003) pointed out “in cognitive theory, acquiring a second language is the same as learning any complex skill: a range of sub-skills must be practiced in ‘controlled’ processing until they can be integrated into automatic or fluent performance” (p. 39).

With respect to how cognitive theory is applied to different teaching approaches. PPP is considered as a skill-building approach which also involves cognitive processes (Long, 2015). Furthermore, the cognitive phase in Anderson’s skill-building theory (Anderson, 1982) which informed the PPP approach is linked to cognitive learning theory because learners try to learn the target language (DMs), their meanings, and how to use them, which in effect turns their declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge. TBLT is considered as a cognitive-interactionist approach as it involves both cognitive processes as well as interaction, Furthermore, TBLT involves completing tasks in which learners communicate with each other, exchange ideas and experiences – all cognitive processes. According to Ellis (2003), “[a] task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills, and also various cognitive processes” (p. 16). In the same vein, Prabhu (1987) pointed out that in doing tasks learners “arrive at an outcome from given

information through some process of thought” (p. 24). It can be said that, in using TBLT learners engage in a number of cognitive activities, such as problem solving, listing and decision making.

So, the activities in TBLT involve a number of cognitive procedures which ultimately promote learners’ learning and acquisition. Doughty (2001), for example, claimed that “progress in SLA is thought often to depend crucially upon cognitive processes such as paying attention to features of target input” (p. 206), and noted that progress in adult SLA depends on cognitive processes such as differences between input and output. For instance, in the TBLT task in this study, learners need to carry out cognitive comparisons between their presentation and the good model in order to find the differences between them which ultimately enhances their learning of the target SDMs.

However, as mentioned previously, the main focus of this study is on explicit instruction by using two different teaching techniques (deductive and inductive) rather than comparing explicit and implicit instruction (a number of definitions have been explained in section 2.2). Nevertheless, some concepts related to explicit learning within cognitive theory will be emphasized. Dorneyi (2009) described explicit learning as an “unambiguous process characterized by the learners’ conscious and deliberate attempt to master some material or solve a problem” (p. 136). With regard to cognitive involvement in the learning process, learners attempt to give conscious attention to identify concepts and rules in order to find out some regularities (Hulstijn, 2005). In addition, Lashri et al (2013) pointed out that students’ participation is considered as part of the learning process which refers to a learner’s cognitive involvement, emotional engagement and active participation. In brief, all the implemented teaching approaches in the current study

encourage learners to work in groups, discuss the topic, organise ideas and prepare for the presentation.

Dekeyser (2003) distinguished between explicit deductive and explicit inductive learning and stated, “via traditional rule teaching, learning is both deductive and explicit” (p.314). However, when students are encouraged to search for rules from the given examples “learning is inductive and explicit” (Dekeyser, 2003, p.314). Taking the same line, Dorneyi (2009) defined deductive explicit teaching as “presenting learners with concepts and rules upfront” whereas inductive explicit teaching involves “encouraging them to derive and test hypotheses themselves” (p.136).

### **2.6.2 Input hypothesis and comprehensible input**

Firstly, it is necessary to define a number of terms, such as ‘input’ and ‘intake’. Input in SLA relates to “the spoken or written language that learners are exposed to” within the classroom or outside it (Thornbury, 2006, p. 105). However, Richards and Schmidt (2002) defined it as “part of the language to which learners are exposed” that “actually goes in and plays a role in language learning” (p. 262). Krashen’s (1985: p. 2) input hypothesis proposed that: “Humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages, or by receiving ‘comprehensible input’ ... We move from  $i$ , our current level, to  $i + 1$ , the next level along the natural order, by understanding input containing  $i + 1$ ”.

The simple claim of this hypothesis is that the only significant condition required for learning to occur is the availability of “comprehensible input” (Krashen, 1981, 1985). According to Krashen (1982), learning depends on “the amount of comprehensible input the acquirer receives and understands, and the strength of the affective filter, or the degree to which the acquirer is ‘open’ to the input” (p. 9). In brief, SLA is based on learners’

receiving and understanding a considerable amount of what “comprehensible input”. Furthermore, for the  $i + 1$  input to become intake, Krashen proposed three stages: i) understanding the L2 form (i.e. linking it to a meaning), ii) noticing a gap between the L2 form and the language currently within the control of the learner (interlanguage), and iii) the reappearance of the language form in the learner’s language production with minimum frequency (Krashen, 1983, pp. 138-139). In 2003, Krashen referred to his hypothesis as the comprehension hypothesis rather than input hypothesis, and later described it as how “we acquire language when we understand messages that contain aspects of language (vocabulary and grammar)” (2013: p.3).

Krashen (1982) stated that “acquisition occurs when language is used for what it was designed for, communication” (p. 1). On the other hand, Hatch (1978) believed that learning structures are most important, and practising them in communication is secondary to developing fluency. This is a direct contrast to Krashen’s hypothesis, in which acquiring structures occurs as a result of understanding meaning. However, Krashen (1982) argued that “a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage  $i$  to stage  $i + 1$  is that the acquirer understands input that contains  $i + 1$ , where ‘understand’ means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the message” (p. 21).

In sum, the input hypothesis highlights exposure to comprehensible input as the primary stage of acquiring L2 (Krashen, 1982). Thus, it can be said that the focus of this hypothesis is on the meaning rather than the form of the structures. Indeed, Krashen (1985) claimed that “speaking is a result of acquisition, not its cause” (p. 2); speaking skills cannot be taught directly, but rather emerge on their own. Therefore, the ability to produce the language develops, and is not taught: “We acquire ... only when we

understand language that contains structure that is ‘a little beyond’ where we are now” (Krashen, 1985, p. 21). Krashen (1982) noted that “the input hypothesis relates to acquisition, not learning” (p. 21) and for acquisition to occur, learners should receive comprehensible input. In differentiating between language learning and language acquisition, Krashen (1981) defined language learning as related to the explicit explanation of linguistic rules and equated language acquisition to the process of a child developing the mother tongue. He contended that learning is a conscious process, while acquisition is subconscious. Furthermore, Krashen (1981) argued that although both processes play an important role in attaining L2 competence, acquisition is far more significant.

However, according to Gass et al. (2013), although comprehensible input is significant and important in SLA, the concept is complex. First, the hypothesis is not clear in terms of how to define knowledge level, and the value of  $i + 1$  is not explained in sufficient depth. Second, Krashen does not describe the quantity of suitable input required for acquisition. As Gass et al. (2013) noted: “How do we know whether the quantity is sufficient or not? One token, two tokens, 777 tokens?” (p. 132). Third, the role of extra linguistic information in aiding acquisition is unclear, particularly how it enables understanding of grammatical knowledge and translates it into acquisition (Gass et al., 2013). In this vein, Gregg (1984) stated, “I find it difficult to imagine extra-linguistic information that would enable one to ‘acquire’ the third person singular –s ...” (cited by Gass et al., 2013, p. 132). It should be noted that Krashen acknowledged these issues. His hypotheses were proposed to instigate research and discussion as indeed they have, rather than establish hard theory or answers.

Regardless of SLA researchers' criticism of Krashen's input hypothesis, his work is still considered significant. The input hypothesis focuses on the role of comprehensible input in SLA, but it is also necessary to consider the production of comprehensible output, as this is a means of establishing whether acquisition has occurred. The following section discusses the output hypothesis that informed both the PPP approach and the TBLT approach.

### **2.6.3 Output hypothesis**

As the main focus of this study is the production of DMs, the output hypothesis is a key aspect. Developed by Swain (1985), the output hypothesis was a response to Krashen's work, and was proposed as an addition to the input and interaction hypothesis rather than an alternative. In particular, Swain (1985) argued that although Krashen's (1981, 1985) notion of comprehensible input might be necessary for the acquisition of a second or foreign language, it is insufficient for guaranteeing that the output will be native speaker-like. The main focus of Swain's (1985) research was on the relationship between input and output in relation to language proficiency. The study sample comprised children who were NS of English learning French as L2 among French NS. Based on the results, Swain (1985) introduced the term 'comprehensible output' (CO), and proposed that the production of spoken or written language could enable learning or acquisition to occur.

It is notable that Swain did not minimize the role of comprehensible input in SLA. Rather, Swain and Lapkin (1995) claimed that "sometimes, under some conditions, output facilitates second language learning in ways that are different from, or enhance, those of input" (p. 371). Indeed, Swain (1985) did not argue that comprehensible output is the sole factor affecting language acquisition, but asserted that it has an undeniable impact on language acquisition. Swain (1995) proposed three main functions of the output

hypothesis in SLA. First, the production of the target language promotes language fluency through practice. Second, a focus on accuracy rather than fluency in output enhances ‘noticing’, which can be summarised as follows: “The activity of producing the target language may prompt second language learners to consciously recognize some of their linguistic problems” (Swain, 1995, p. 126). Thus, output attracts learners’ attention to the target forms (Swain, 1995, 2000). Finally, Swain (1995) proposed that learners’ output delivers a metalinguistic function that enables them to control their linguistic knowledge. In addition, it is necessary to highlight that the output hypothesis suggests that production will assist acquisition only when the learner is ‘pushed’ (Ellis, 1990).

Krashen (1981) argued that generating comprehensible input is the sole contributor to acquisition demonstrated through output. However, Swain (1985) argued that “comprehensible output ... is a necessary mechanism of acquisition independent of the role of comprehensible input” (p. 252). Indeed, she proposed a crucial role of output in SLA: that the need to generate comprehensible output provides learners with opportunities to test out hypotheses they have derived from the input to establish whether they work. Thus, output ultimately promotes SLA. Ellis (1990) states that “production is the trigger that forces learners to pay attention to the means of expression” (p. 117).

Thus, it can be said that by producing the target language, learners will be able to convey their intended meaning successfully (Swain, 1995). Long (1983a, 1983b, 1985) claimed that the core components of SLA are those involved in the integration of comprehensible input, interaction, and negotiation of meaning in discussion. Swain and Lapkin (1995) believed that learners “notice a gap in their own knowledge when they encounter a problem in trying to produce L2” (p. 373). In other words, they argued that learners must endeavour to produce comprehensible output in order to identify gaps between their



current knowledge (what they know) and their production (what they say).

Furthermore, Swain (1985) asserted that learners need both comprehensible input and the impetus to produce comprehensible output if they want to improve their accuracy and fluency by developing their interlanguage (IL). Izumi (2003) summarised its benefits, and suggested that “output, by itself, can contribute to learning by strengthening the IL knowledge” (p. 187). Izumi (2003) also stated that:

it is assumed that grammatical encoding in production by adult native speakers occurs subconsciously and automatically. However, this may not be the case for language learners, who are still in the process of learning a language and whose language use requires a great deal of controlled processing and attention (p. 183).

The concept of comprehensible output predicts that learners acquire the language when there is “a communicative breakdown” and “the learner is to use alternate means to get across his or her message ... precisely, coherently and appropriately” (Swain, 1985, pp. 248-249). Thus, output should be pushed to be comprehensible. Swain (1993) emphasized the importance of providing learners with substantial opportunities to speak and write in class, and also argued that they should be pushed to do so. It is possible that teacher-led and collaborative activities can accomplish this aim.

The output hypothesis indicates that collaborative tasks in particular might be beneficial for L2 learning (Swain, 1993). However, Krashen (1998) argued that pushing learners to talk is unpleasant and causes feelings of discomfort, supporting this claim with some earlier studies which demonstrated that foreign language classes were a huge source of anxiety and annoyance when learners were asked to engage in speaking activities in the target language in front of the class (e.g. Loughrin-Sacco, 1992; Price, 1991; Young,

1991). Laughrin-Sacco (1992) for example stated, “for nearly every student ... speaking was the highest anxiety-causing activity” (p.93). On this basis, Krashen (1998) claimed that in order to avoid learners’ anxiety “providing more comprehensible input seems to be a more reasonable strategy than increasing output” (p. 181).

However, Swain and Lapkin (1995) found that “young adolescent second language learners do indeed become aware of gaps in their linguistic knowledge as they produce their L2” (p. 383), as the need for output pushes them to notice the gap between what they are able to produce and what they really want to produce. In a follow-up study conducted in 1998, Swain supported this idea, and contended that by producing the target language, learners notice that they are not able to convey their meaning precisely, which leads them to acknowledge their linguistic problems. Moreover, a further study by Swain and Lapkin (2001) noted that the use of “pushed output” activities (e.g. picture description) in French immersion classes with teenagers in Canada prompted them to produce a “substantial proportion of form-focused language-related episodes” (p. 111). Furthermore, “they brought to attention gaps in their own knowledge and worked out possible solutions through hypothesis formulation and testing” (Swain & Lapkin, 2001, p. 110).

Many researchers have examined classroom activities based on output. Mackey (2002), for instance, provided proof of the role of pushed output in a stimulated recall activity. In the study, a group of adult students learning ESL watched a video recording of themselves interacting with each other. The task was to recall what they were thinking at the time of the interaction, representing the concept of ‘being pushed’. Another study that provides support for the output hypothesis is a small-scale study conducted by Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) in which two groups of learners (control and experimental) were given the same task, a picture description. The results of the study revealed that only the students in the

experimental group, who were pushed, were able to “improve the accuracy of their production results not only in immediate improved performance but also in gains in accuracy over time” (Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993, p. 208). In this way, Nobuyoshi and Ellis’s (1993) study provides some support for the notion of pushed output. However, they acknowledged that the research addressed only a small number of students and its findings are not conclusive, and the study needs to be replicated with a larger number of learners. Finally, Yan-Ping (1991) conducted a similar study in China, and found that teaching grammatical structures to Chinese learners had a positive impact on their learning of structures, which suggested that “form-based classroom instruction is conducive to the success of SLA” (p. 263).

Despite evidence that output plays a crucial role in L2 learning, Swain’s output hypothesis has been criticized by a number of scholars. First, it is evident that pushing learners to speak may raise their affective filters (Krashen, 1998). Second, Gass et al. (1998) have suggested that both the output and interaction hypotheses are not sufficient to explain language acquisition, and that other factors are also influential. Indeed, Swain (1985) did not propose that producing comprehensible output is the sole condition of language acquisition, but noted that although interaction has a positive impact on language learning inside and outside the classroom, there are other factors which contribute to the interaction and affect learning.

Some critics have questioned the importance of interaction altogether. For example, Sato (1986) argued that conversational interaction might not have a positive impact on learners’ interlanguage development. Moreover, Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) contended that some learners in their study did not benefit from being pushed, and their language levels did not improve.

Thus, the need to produce comprehensible output may induce linguistic improvement in some learners, but not in others. This raises the question of “how these learners are to succeed in developing acceptable levels of grammatical accuracy” (Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993, p. 209). As Nobuyoshi and Ellis suggested, it could be said that if learners are competent in communication it does not matter if they are grammatically inaccurate. However, this is not necessarily satisfactory, and explicit grammar teaching may be required in addition to communication activities.

Finally, in his early work, Krashen (1985, 1989) considered output to relate to language which is already known and thus does not have any vital function in the SLA process. Later, Krashen (1994) claimed that it is possible to improve language competence (e.g. literacy skills) without any language production, and a vast number of studies have confirmed this claim (cf. Krashen, 1998). Indeed, Ellis (1995) provided an example of acquisition without output: in his study, those in the group with premodified input, who did no speaking activities at all, acquired two to three times more vocabulary than those who interacted with the native teacher (p. 418).

Thus, it is clear that although it is not the only factor, the production of comprehensible output has an impact on language acquisition, although it is not clear in what way. Izumi and Bigelow (2000) reviewed research related to the role of comprehensible output and stated that “even though student output is a prevalent feature of many language teaching practices, exactly whether and how it helps with language learning has often been assumed rather than vigorously tested” (p. 245). In addition, Shehadeh (2002) contended that most research is descriptive and “focused on occurrence rather than acquisition” (p. 601).

Despite a considerable body of research which has provided support for the input hypothesis in L2 teaching methods, there is a paucity of research that has examined the output hypothesis in relation to ELT methods. Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that providing learners with increased input is beneficial, but this input must be practised and transferred to output, whether spontaneously (e.g. immediate activities) or with preparation (e.g. giving presentations), so that learners are better able to make use of this input in the future. Thus, I suggest that there should be a balance between comprehensible input and output in the classroom.

The following section discusses the interaction hypothesis that informs TBLT and its relationship with the input and output hypotheses.

#### **2.6.4 The relationship between the interaction hypothesis and the input and output hypotheses**

Long (1996) noted, interaction and negotiation of meaning “facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways” (p. 451- 452). Furthermore, the interaction hypothesis proposes that learners acquire the language through interaction (Krashen, 1998) as it helps learners to receive both comprehensible input and feedback (Long, 1996) and make possible changes in their output (Swain, 1995).

There are two versions of the interaction hypothesis: strong and weak (Krashen, 1998). Ellis et al. (1994) argued that language acquisition is likely to occur without interaction, and that the strong version of the hypothesis cannot be supported. The weak version proposes that “interaction can be a good source of comprehensible input” (Krashen, 1998, p.180). Long (1996) claimed that the role of interaction is to facilitate learning, and there

are different factors involved in L2 learning (cf. Gass et al., 1998). Ellis (2009) also supported that claim and noted that interaction in the target language promoted learning. However, Gass et al. (1998) argued that “[a]lthough interaction may provide a structure that allows input to become salient and hence noticed, interaction should not be seen as a cause of acquisition; it can only set the scene for potential learning” (p. 305). However, Ellis (1994) argued that, SLA might occur if learners have access to input, which could be in written or spoken form. Regarding the spoken input Ellis (1994) claimed that it occurs through interaction, such as learners talk with teacher or other learners. In brief, it can be seen that interaction promotes language learning while input facilitates language acquisition.

There is a link between the interaction hypothesis and the output hypothesis, in that the acquisition of language is facilitated by interaction (Krashen, 1998). Ellis (1994) pointed out that “spoken input may occur in the context of interaction”. In this study, interaction between learners and a tutor is considered a necessity, as well as an effective method of acquiring the target language.

## **2.7 Teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia**

English is a widely-used global language (Crystal, 2003) and there has been an increased interest in learning English in Saudi Arabia. Learners in Saudi Arabia realized that English is essential subject in HE and no longer view it only as a subject to pass in exams (Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013). According to Al-Seghayer (2014)

Policy-makers, stakeholders, and other decision-making bodies in Saudi Arabia view the English language as an important tool for the development of the country in terms of both international relations and scientific-technological advancement.

In Saudi Arabia, English has the official status as the primary foreign language

and the country continues to show considerable interest in English language programs. (p. 143)

All new students in Saudi Arabian universities must undertake a compulsory foundation year, which has a considerable focus on teaching EFL in order to improve learners' language proficiency and language skills (Shah *et al.*, 2013). In addition, at the beginning of the academic year, students take a test to determine their language level, and they are placed in different English classes accordingly. English language teachers must be aware that "second language classrooms should be characterized by a variety of activities, with an emphasis on those which engage students in meaningful interaction, but with an awareness on the part of the teacher that some attention to language form is also necessary" (Lightbown, 2000, p. 433).

With regard to teaching DMs in Saudi Arabia, Al-wossabi (2014) asserted that introducing them may not only increase EFL learners' awareness of their use in oral output, but may also encourage learners to employ them, as they are easy to master when taught in this way. In addition, using DMs will lead students to produce coherent sentences, link their ideas, avoid communication breakdowns and may enhance learners' fluency (Al-wossabi, 2014).

Several issues must be addressed and taken into consideration regarding the teaching of EFL in Saudi Arabia. First, a significant concern is learners' attitudes towards languages and the acquisition of skills (Shah *et al.*, 2013), which are often negative, or at best ambivalent. The negative attitude of students towards English reduces their opportunities to communicate in English and to attain communicative competence (Fareh, 2010).

Second, Al-Seghayer (2014) noted "English learners receive little exposure to communicative situations which, in turn, leads to poor results of the overall teaching-

learning activities” (p.19). As a result, some vital activities and skills may not be taught, as the main target of educators is to finish syllabus or the coursebooks, whether learners benefit or not. In line with that, Al-Seghayer (2014) claims that “teachers find it difficult to cover all of the course material and effectively teach language skills” (p.19)

Furthermore, teachers are not free to choose their own teaching methods, and they must comply with the policies and procedures of institutions (Shah et al., 2013). Indeed, Hall (2011) noted that teachers are “bound in by social convention, learners’ expectations and school and ministry policies about how to teach and what methodology to follow” (p. 101). Fareh (2010) also explained that most teachers do not take a course in how to teach EFL, so they are not sufficiently qualified in either subject or methodologies. As a result, they tend to adopt the traditional methods.

Most of the studies carried out in the Saudi context have posited that students are responsible for their low achievements in English language acquisition (Liton, 2012). However, Khan (2011) presented a different and convincing point of view, proposing that educators are responsible for language teaching problems. He argued that teaching problems arise as a result of insufficient qualifications, teachers’ lack of EFL training, and lack of experience as bilingual educators in an Arabic setting.

It is clear that many factors contribute to the teaching and learning of English in the Saudi context. Thus, it is likely unjust to blame any single factor for the problems, be it the learners, the teachers, or even the textbooks. Nonetheless, teaching English in Saudi Arabia is a challenge, and for improvement to take place, “there is a need for active participation by the policy makers, syllabus designers, textbook writers, teachers and students” (Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013, p. 116).



### **2.7.1 Teaching methods in the Saudi Arabian EFL context**

According to Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013), within the Saudi context “explicit classroom teaching should be provided to improve the knowledge of four basic skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking” (p. 117). However, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia tend to follow traditional methods (*Shah et al.*, 2013). According to Al-Seghayer (2014), teaching English in Saudi Arabia is “largely centered on the audio-lingual method (ALM) and, to a lesser extent, the grammar translation method (GTM)” (p.22), mainly teacher-centred methods (Fareh 2010). Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) have observed that teachers in Saudi Arabia adopt traditional methods as they find it difficult to employ communicative methodologies as a result of many institutional and sociocultural restrictions. Consequently, learners in this context are not taught how to use the language, as English teachers base their lessons on coursebooks and the blackboard and do not use authentic or supplementary materials (Al-Seghayer, 2014). These Traditional approaches to teaching English have generally been considered insufficient, and unable to develop the L2 proficiency needed by learners for effective communication (Stern, 1983; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1996; Ellis, 2003). Based on the arguments outlined above, and having provided a clear view of the nature of English teaching in the Saudi context, investigating TBLT (a new way of teaching in this context) and the PPP approach (widely used by EFL teachers in organizing lesson) will help establish the most effective way of teaching DMs to learners in this specific context, in terms of the effect on their spoken skills.

The following section presents a discussion of the teaching methods employed in this study, in order to establish which might be the most effective way of instructing learners in the use of DMs in the Saudi Arabian EFL context. Furthermore, the section highlights the theories that have informed these teaching methods. The inductive and deductive PPP approaches are based on Anderson’s skill-building theory (1982), while TBLT is based

on the interaction hypothesis. Then, teaching EFL in the Saudi Arabian context is discussed further. Finally, the three teaching methods are described in detail.

## **2.8 Teaching methods adopted in the study**

All teaching methods examined in this study are used within CLT, which is considered a broad teaching approach. Furthermore, CLT can be realized in different classroom practices, and takes two different forms: strong and weak (Thornbury, 2006). According to Thornbury (2006), in the strong form of CLT, communication must come first as learning occurs through using the language; this is a significant feature of the TBLT method. In contrast, in the weak form of CLT, language learning comes first, which is then practised in communication (Thornbury, 2006), which is consistent with the deductive PPP approach. The following subsections examine the deductive/inductive PPP approach and TBLT approach, respectively.

### **2.8.1 The presentation- practice- production approach (PPP)**

According to Skehan (1998) and Willis (2004), the PPP approach is a well-established and long-established teaching approach. However, they claimed that, PPP has been replaced by TBLT. Tomlinson (2011) defined PPP simply and briefly as “an approach to teaching language items which allows a sequence of presentation of the item, practice of the item and then production (i.e. use) of the item” (p. xv). The PPP approach is a form-focused approach, and is common in that many teachers use it and many textbooks are based on it. Thornbury (2006) explained the stages of a PPP lesson with regard to both the teachers’ and the learners’ roles:

a pre-selected grammar item is first presented to the learners, e.g. by means of a text or through demonstration.... Its rules of form and use are either explained or elicited from the learners. The item is then practised in isolation, and with an

emphasis on accuracy. Teacher control is gradually relinquished, and activities ... are set up to encourage free production. (p. 172)

Thus, the main role of the teacher is to present and explain the new items in a deductive PPP, or present the new items elicited from learners in an inductive PPP. Then, in the practice stage, the teacher gives learners the opportunity to practise the taught language in a controlled exercise. Finally, at the production stage, learners produce the language in a more independent exercise like a communicative task (such as an oral presentation). In summary, the sequencing of a typical PPP lesson is illustrated below (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 447-448):

- **Presentation:** the introduction of new items, when their meanings are explained, demonstrated, and other necessary information is given.
- **Practice:** new items are practised, either individually or in groups. Practice activities usually move from controlled to less controlled practice.
- **Production:** students use the new items more freely, with less or little control by the teacher.

According to Skehan:

the first stage is generally focused on a single point of grammar which is presented explicitly or implicitly to maximize the chances that the underlying rule will be understood and internalized. This would essentially aim at the development of declarative knowledge. (1998, p. 9)

The second stage involves practising the target forms in teacher-supervised, controlled exercises with a focus on accuracy. The aim of the second stage is to convert the declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge (Sato, 2009). The third stage is the production stage, where “learners would be required to produce the language more

spontaneously, based on meanings the learner himself or herself would want to express” (Skehan, 1998, p. 93). Thus, in the production stage, the teacher allows learners to produce language more freely, sometimes through communicative activities (Sato, 2009). In this way, learners will not demonstrate their communicative skills until they reach the final stage (production), when they are required to produce the language in a more communicative way, whether in spoken or written form. Willis and Willis (2007) identified the main features of the PPP method:

1. A focus on one or two forms.
2. This focus on form comes before learners engage in communicative activity.
3. The teacher has control of learner language.
4. The success of the procedure is judged in terms of whether or not learners produce the forms with an acceptable level of accuracy. (p. 4)

The PPP approach is related to Anderson’s (1982) skill-building theory. According to DeKeyser (1998), there are three common stages of skill-building theory:

1. Cognitive stage: learners must be given explicit instruction of the target forms (in this case DMs) (Presentation).
2. Associative stage: learners practise the language to develop their declarative knowledge and turn it into procedural knowledge (Practice).
3. Autonomous stage: learners use the language through communicative tasks to promote autonomous production (Production).

The skill-building theory implies that learners should be given explicit teaching of target forms, followed by activities or exercises, before finally producing the language. In support of Anderson’s theory, Yamaoka (2006) claimed that imitation, repetition, and pattern practice are important for the conversion of declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge in the EFL context. However, Littlewood (2007) noted that the “PPP sequence (presentation, practice, production) represents not only a way of ‘delivering’ the language

specified in the syllabus but also a way of controlling the interaction in class” (p. 244).

With regard to the application of the PPP method in the current study, the researcher believes that this method appears effective for teaching learners in the Saudi context. Furthermore, the learners will likely have experienced a similar method in that teachers present the new items to students and let them practice it in controlled exercise, thus, they may feel comfortable with this way of teaching. Although PPP is a clear, simple, and attractive way of teaching and practising the target language, as previously mentioned, it has been widely criticized.

Skehan (1998) claimed that PPP is “out of fashion” (p. 94), and argued that it is linked to behaviourism, which is a discredited method and not likely to help learners succeed in the acquisition of target forms because “there is a linear sequence to learning units of language when they are covered, [on the assumption that] they are learned” (Skehan, 1996, p. 50). Ellis (2003) supports Skehan’s point of view, considering PPP as linear.

Critics have also questioned the ability of the PPP method to meet the requirements of the CLT approach, which Ellis (2003) asserted should be to consider language as “a tool for communicating rather than as an object for study or manipulation” (p. ix). Furthermore, Willis and Willis (2009) argued that, “in a PPP methodology learners are so dominated by the presentation and practice that at the production stage they are preoccupied with grammatical form rather than with meaning” (pp. 3-4). This suggests that PPP fails to improve learners’ communication skills (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1998; Willis & Willis, 2009). In addition, Harmer (2007) noted that it is a teacher-centred method. While scholars such as Ellis (2003), Skehan (1998), and Willis and Willis (2009) claimed that learning through PPP or other form-focused approaches might end in failure, I argue that the suitability of the PPP approach depends on the context and the way in

which it is implemented. For example, data from different studies conducted in other EFL contexts such as Japan has suggested that:

Careful examination of the meaning of English in the Japanese context indicates that CLT and TBL are not yet as suitable as we would expect in encouraging Japanese EFL learners to produce output in the classroom ... these Western approaches, which do not take sufficient account of the unique learning environment in Japan, are not yet as practical in application as the PPP approach. (Sato, 2009, p. 12-13).

In contrast, both Burrows (2008) and Sato (2009) have concluded that PPP is the most suitable method for the Japanese EFL context. Sato (2009) and Yamaoka (2006) argue in favour of the PPP approach in the Japanese context, combining activities such as drilling and imitation, which are crucial in the input-deficient EFL environment.

Furthermore, when using this approach, learners practise the new items in the second and third stages (practice and production), which undermines Harmer's assertion that the PPP approach is teacher-centred. It can be said that, giving learners communicative activities in the production stage would enable them to practise the language in a communicative manner. Consequently, dismissing the PPP approach from EFL classes seems premature (DeKeyser, 1998). Indeed, many foreign classrooms are based on the PPP approach and many learners are learning through it. So, despite its disadvantages, it would be unfair to dismiss this approach in foreign language learning. This view is supported by Carless (2009), who emphasized that, "P-P-P is enduring, not easily dismissed, particularly because of its perceived pragmatic advantages, and meriting further analyses" (p. 64). Therefore, in the Saudi EFL context, it will be crucial to test out different communicative teaching methods.

Some researchers have defended the PPP approach. For example, Swan (2005) described it as a “useful routine for presenting and practising structural features until, ideally, they can be produced quickly and easily under semi-controlled conditions” (p. 386). Furthermore, Carless (2009) noted that “P-P-P has a longer history in language teaching” (p. 52), and that the “perceived complexity of TBLT appears to be a factor in teacher preferences for P-P-P” (p. 58).

Despite the fact that there are many doubts concerning the approach and its usefulness in the classroom, it is still a popular framework, and is widely used because of its simplicity and the clear sequences for both teachers and learners. I argue that EFL students in Saudi Arabia would benefit from a combination of the PPP approach and the TBLT approach, termed by Carless (2009) as “productive versions of P-P-P” (p. 64). In a combined PPP and TBLT approach, the teacher presents the target items and instructs students to practise the language in a controlled activity in order to develop accuracy and build-up confidence in using the target words before undertaking the communicative tasks in the final production stage. According to Carless (2009), it is possible to develop a productive version of PPP which minimizes its limitations by using some task-supported methods (Ellis, 2003; Samuda & Bygate, 2008). This means providing learners with opportunities to practise the language items introduced in the PPP approach (Ellis, 2003).

In summary, it cannot be said that using the PPP approach is better than TBLT or that it works better in the EFL context until both are put into practice. In addition, although both approaches have received criticism, both also possess distinct advantages, and one may work better in a certain setting than the other. Thus, all methods (deductive PPP, inductive PPP, and TBLT) will be employed in this study to determine which works best and is more appropriate for teaching DMs, as well as which method best enables the students to

internalize and use DMs, in this particular teaching setting. On the one hand, the structure provided by the PPP approach may mean that learners find it familiar. On the other hand, TBLT generates the communication of meaning through tasks, which is likely to encourage and motivate learners.

It is also crucial to find out whether PPP approach is effective, practical, and beneficial for EFL learners in the Saudi HE context. It is necessary to see how different teaching methods such as PPP (both deductive and inductive) can be applied to identify the impact of different methods on the learning and acquisition of the target DMs.

A number of studies have been carried out on PPP in an EFL context, such as Japan, China, Hong Kong, Vietnam. However, to date, only a few studies have investigated the effectiveness of the PPP approach in teaching DMs in comparison to other teaching methods. For example, Jones (2009) conducted a study on teaching and learning spoken DMs in an ESL setting by using the LA approach and the inductive PPP approach. He found that both LA and inductive PPP led to increase usage of the target forms, however, inductive PPP had a greater effect on the participants' use of the target DMs in the post-test (Jones, 2009).

A comparative study was also conducted by Jones and Carter (2013), which compared the explicit teaching of DMs to two groups of Chinese students in an ESL context (United Kingdom) using two different teaching methods (inductive PPP and illustration-interaction-induction with a control group). The findings of the study revealed that both frameworks had a positive impact on learners' output of the target forms. However, the PPP approach was more effective, as students used the target forms in the short-term but not in the long-term with the III model.



Similarly, Alraddadi (2016) conducted a more recent study that compared the impact of teaching SDMs in an EFL classroom setting on students' learning and acquisition of the target forms using deductive PPP and TBLT. The findings of the study demonstrated that both TBLT and deductive PPP facilitated students' use of the target DMs. However, Alraddadi (2016) noted that "TBLT seems to work better in this context as the long-lasting effect appeared in the TBLT group" (p. 24).

It can be concluded that most studies conducted on the teaching of DMs have examined the use of explicit and implicit teaching methods (see section 2.9) without reference to precise teaching approaches, except the studies discussed above. This section has presented and discussed studies used the PPP approach to teach DMs, and the next section will demonstrate the TBLT approach.

### **2.8.2 The task-based language teaching approach (TBLT)**

Many researchers have supported the use of TBLT (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Long, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996). This section presents the background of TBLT, when and where the approach arose, and the definitions of TBLT and tasks, which are considered the main element of the learning cycle.

TBLT and learning was developed by Prabhu (1987) in southern India, to help learners communicate and use the target language by carrying out tasks, in this case considered opportunities for effective interaction. TBLT is generally considered a development of the CLT approach rather than a new movement (Nunan, 2004; Littlewood, 2004; Richards, 2005). Ellis (2003) pointed out that TBLT "constitutes a strong version of CLT" (p.29) and is a refinement of the communicative approach. TBLT theory proposes that this interaction enhances language acquisition as learners try to understand each other and

express meaning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, some scholars (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Long & Crookes, 1992) have argued that TBLT evolved as a result of the limitations and inadequacies of the PPP approach.

Thornbury (2006) defined TBLT as an “approach that makes the task the basic unit for planning and teaching” (p. 223). Similarly, Richards and Schmidt (2010) also defined TBLT as “a teaching approach based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the central units for the planning and delivery of instruction. Such tasks are said to provide an effective basis for language learning” (p. 585). In addition, Willis and Willis (2007) stated “the most effective way to teach a language is by engaging learners in real language use in the classroom. This is done by designing tasks (discussions, problems, games and so on) which require learners to use the language for themselves” (p. 1). In this approach, language is viewed as a means of communication and learners are encouraged to use it. The approach perceives “meaning as the starting point for language development, and ... form as developing from meaning” (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 7).

Furthermore, according to Ellis (2003), there are two versions of TBLT: “the strong version sees tasks as a means of enabling learners to learn a language by experiencing how it is used in communication” (p.28). Butler, also considered the strong version as “the central component of syllabus design” (2011, p.38). The weak version of TBLT, provides “communicative practice for language items that have been introduced in a more traditional way” (Ellis, 2003 p.46). Ellis (2003) called this task-supported language teaching. In this study, the strong version of TBLT has been implemented because tasks were the main focus and there was no intention to teach learners declarative knowledge as would be the case in the weak version of TBLT.

The primary focus of TBLT is communicative tasks, which are the main aspect of the learning cycle. According to Plonsky and Kim (2016), “In the last two decades, tasks have been used by numerous researchers to elicit learner production” (p. 73). Although researchers have identified numerous definitions for tasks, all of them have included the use of communicative language while carrying them out (Nunan, 2004). For example, Littlewood (2004) argued that communicative tasks “serve not only as major components of the methodology but also as units around which a course may be organized” (p. 324). Prabhu (1987) defined task as “an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process” (p24). Similarly, Nunan (2004) defined it as “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (p. 4). A more in-depth definition of pedagogical tasks was provided by Samuda and Bygate (2008), who describe it as “a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning, through process or product or both” (p. 69). Finally, Willis and Willis (2007) defined tasks in terms of their features:

A task has a number of defining characteristics, among them: does it engage the learners’ interest; is there a primary focus on meaning; is success measured in terms of non-linguistic outcome rather than accurate use of language forms; and does it relate to real world activities? The more confidently we can answer yes to each of these questions the more task-like the activity (p. 13).

Willis and Willis (2007) also provided examples of the tasks, such as personal story telling, which will immediately attract the learners’ interest, and stating and sharing

opinions. They contended, “the most successful activities in the classroom involve a spontaneous exchange of meaning” (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 8).

In brief, despite the different definitions, there are a number of similarities and key features. Based on these definitions, ‘task’ can be defined as an activity which requires students to focus on meaning as well as use the language in order to enhance language learning. As these definitions indicate that using tasks in teaching can influence learners’ output, the TBLT approach will be used in this study to motivate learners to use and practise the taught language through giving group presentations. Another reason why it has been chosen for this study is that there has been a considerable amount of research into TBLT in the classroom setting.

In the last 20 years, there has been increased interest in exploring TBLT in classroom settings in different contexts (Leaver & Willis, 2004; Littlewood, 2007; Van den Branden, 2006). Studies have also focused on the different aspects of TBLT, such as the impact of the design and implementation of tasks on learners’ oral output, the outcomes of TBLT, and the role of tasks in the development of the L2. To illustrate, Bygate et al. (2000) conducted a study to explore pedagogical tasks and noted that the notion of a task can be examined in different ways, depending on the research or pedagogical perspectives. Ellis (2000) explained that “researchers, for example, may view a task in terms of a set of variables that impact on performance and language acquisition whereas teachers see it as a unit of work in an overall scheme of work” (p. 194).

Since its introduction, tasks have become an essential part of teaching, syllabus design, and learner assessment (Nunan, 2006). However, in the last two decades, a growing body of research has focused on TBLT and learning in different settings (Skehan, 1998; Willis,

1996; Bygate et al., 2001; Ellis, 2000 & 2003; Carless, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2012; Nunan, 2005; Littlewood, 2007; Van Den Branden, 2006; Willis & Willis, 2007, Shehadeh & Coombe, 2012; Thomas & Reinders, 2015). Some research has focused on how TBLT could enhance language learning (e.g. Lee, 2000; Bygate et al., 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2005). While a number of studies have examined the feasibility and suitability of implementing TBLT in schools, from both teachers' and learners' perspectives. For instance, Ellis (2006) investigated a number of features of TBLT, such as how it incorporates meaning and form because the communicative task comes before the focus on form; it effectively combines both form and meaning. Moreover, learners not only carry out the task, they report it (Ellis, 2006). The existing literature has examined different aspects of TBLT in similar EFL contexts, such as Japan, China, Hong Kong, Korea. However, only a relatively small body of literature has focused on TBLT in the Saudi EFL context. Studies on both TBLT in the EFL and TBLT in the Saudi EFL context are addressed below.

With regard to studies carried out in Asian EFL contexts, Carless (2004) investigated the application of TBLT in three elementary schools in Hong Kong, and explored the challenges and concerns of implementing the method in the Asian context specifically. In particular, he examined three common issues that arise when implementing TBLT in an EFL context: the use of the first language (mother tongue), classroom management, and the production of the target language. In 2007, Carless also studied TBLT in secondary schools in the same context. Other research which has examined the implementation of TBLT in an EFL context includes work carried out by Zhang (2007) in primary schools in China, and Michel (2003) in Korea. Lai (2015) explored the challenges of TBLT in relation to learners, teachers, classrooms, and sociocultural considerations. In addition, Littlewood (2006) investigated teachers' concerns regarding

the implementation of both CLT and TBLT in East Asian primary and secondary schools. Zheng and Borg (2013) considered teachers' beliefs regarding TBLT in secondary schools in China.

Little research has been conducted on the implementation of TBLT in the Saudi EFL context, although several studies exist that touch on TBLT and so can be considered relevant to this paper. For example, Al-Jarf (2005) investigated the effectiveness of TBLT in improving the writing skills of postgraduate students. Her study was based on experimental classrooms, and results showed a great improvement in learners' writing skills from pre-test to post-test.

Similarly, Al-Muhaimeed (2015) carried out a comparative study in an intermediate school which compared the effectiveness of adopting TBLT to the use of traditional teaching methods, in order to measure the effects of teaching methods on learners' reading comprehension. The findings demonstrated that learners' in the TBLT group scored higher than in the control groups. Furthermore, they also developed positive attitudes towards learning situations (Al-Muhaimeed, 2015).

Hakim (2015) also carried out a valuable study on TBLT in the Saudi context at university level. She implemented TBLT in traditional learning classes and examined the relationship between students' learning styles and a variety of tasks, in order to tackle some of the students' learning problems, such as low motivation and lack of engagement. The findings of the study revealed that the implementation of the TBLT approach improved learners' performance and increased their motivation for learning. Hakim (2015) also noted that implementing TBLT in an EFL context "enhanced students' satisfaction with different instructional tasks and motivated them to work harder and use

the target language in their interaction while participating in collaborative tasks of pair and group work” (p. 209).

Furthermore, Elmahdi (2016) explored the impact of TBLT on EFL learners’ performance by providing a framework for TBLT and discussing the factors that may affect its implementation, noting that using TBLT should be given more attention in EFL classes and suggested that more research is needed to better explore its effectiveness.

All the studies discussed above demonstrated the effectiveness of implementing TBLT in Saudi EFL context on various language skills (i.e. writing, reading comprehension, learning styles and the use of tasks and speaking). Accordingly, based on the positive impact of adopting TBLT, it was another reason to decide to implement TBLT and compare it with other teaching approaches (deductive PPP and inductive PPP) to find out which teaching approaches promote learners’ learning and acquisition of DMs and how this impacts on learners’ presentation skills. Furthermore, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, apart from the pilot study for this research, no other study has been published that has addressed teaching DMs by using TBLT in the Saudi context. This pilot study was a comparative one conducted by Alraddadi (2016), which investigated whether TBLT or PPP was the most effective way to teach SDMs in an EFL setting,

Like any other teaching approaches, TBLT has received a number of criticisms and objections. Some researchers, such as Harmer (2009), have criticized the task criteria introduced by Willis and Willis (2007). Harmer (2009) argued that these criteria are “less than helpful” and that this method of defining tasks represents “a lack of willingness to pin down exactly what is on offer”, and is “less than totally persuasive” (p. 174). Furthermore, Richards (2005) described Willis and Willis’ concept of the task as “a

somewhat fuzzy one” (p. 33), and Littlewood (2007) observed “conceptual uncertainties” related to the proposed classification (p. 274). However, Willis and Willis (2007) asserted that the task criteria were not intended to provide a “watertight definition” (p. 13). A simple and clear critique of TBLT is that it “is more complex than P-P-P” (Carless, 2009, p. 51).

A well-known criticism of TBLT is that it is unsuitable for low-level students (Burton, 2002; Swan, 2005) but appropriate for advanced students (Swan 2005). Carless (2009) has supported this argument, noting, “TBLT strategies are likely to be suitable for adult learners who already have substantial linguistic resources and need mainly to activate this language” (p. 52). Thus, it appears that TBLT is not appropriate for young learners or learners with low proficiency in English, because they do not have the basic skills needed to complete the tasks and participate effectively.

Recent classroom research that has examined the implementation of TBLT in classroom settings has identified many problems that hinder its application, and many challenges related to classroom management, educational cultures, teachers’ perceptions, and learner awareness (Lai & Lin, 2015). Littlewood (2007) delineated five main concerns related to using TBLT in a foreign language context: classroom management, avoidance of English, minimal demands on language competence, incompatibility with public assessment demands, and conflict with educational values and traditions. With regard to classroom management, “the activities associated with CLT and TBLT often present difficulties of practical implementation” (Littlewood, 2007, p. 244), especially with a large number of unmotivated young and adolescent students, in contrast to small classes. In terms of avoidance of English, many teachers have found that learners tend to use their mother tongue while they are performing tasks, and do not use English for communication



(Littlewood, 2007). In addition, Littlewood (2007) observed, “TBLT does not prepare students sufficiently well for the more traditional, form-oriented examinations which will determine their educational future” (p. 245). Similarly, Li (1998) argued that in South Korea examinations are considered a potential barrier to the implementation of communicative approaches, as they affect what occurs in the classrooms. In relation to conflicts with values and traditions, Shim and Baik (2004) found that teachers in South Korea were “caught between government recommendations on the one hand and the demands of students and parents for a more examination-oriented classroom instruction on the other” (p. 246). This indicates that students’ low motivation for effectively engaging in tasks is due to the influence of examinations, which cause them to prioritize accuracy over fluency. Furthermore, teachers struggle between meeting government policies and students’ needs.

Certain other problems have also been highlighted in the literature. One is the lack of adequate time available to teachers to prepare the materials (Adams & Newton, 2009). Another is that, according to Ahmadian (2013), “since tasks are inherently meaning-centred and outcome-oriented they do not foster language learning and may include task performers to simply ‘get the job done’ which might give rise to the production of impoverished language” (p. 247). Furthermore, Sato (2010) questioned the effectiveness of TBLT in teaching grammar in EFL classrooms, stating that “TBLT may not be effective in teaching pre-specified target structures; it is not designed for examination” (p. 191). Indeed, Carless (2012) confirmed the complexity of TBLT implementation for school students and addressed some challenges, including the examination system. It is clear that examinations are considered a barrier to implementing TBLT in schools (Lai, 2015; Shehadeh, 2012; Deng & Carless, 2010; Littlewood, 2007). However, the examination system greatly influences teachers’ selection of teaching methods.

Accordingly, teachers in the Saudi EFL context tend to tailor their teaching approaches to meet examinations requirements. Thus, it is crucial to compare the impact of different teaching methods on the learning/acquisition of DMs in the Saudi EFL context.

In addition, with regard to TBLT specifically, Willis (1996) observed that learners sometimes overuse the target language, and suggested: “learners who do this are probably still ‘in the practice mode’” (p. 134). In brief, proponents of TBLT, such as Willis and Willis (2007) and Ellis (2009), have claimed that criticism of the TBLT approach is as a result of misconceptions.

To conclude, many studies have investigated TBLT, and the criticisms of the approach have been addressed sufficiently and equally. There are a number of unanswered questions regarding the concept of tasks and their benefit in language classrooms. However, several advantages of the approach have been identified:

- The main rationale for TBLT is that when the focus is on meaning, conditions are optimal for acquiring form (Prabhu, 1987).
- In SLA theory, the basis of TBLT has been explained clearly (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1996).
- TBLT is designed to engage learners in meaning-focused tasks (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 2009).

TBLT has a positive influence on learners’ motivation because it engages them in active learning through communication (Carless, 2009). Indeed, Willis and Willis (2007) claimed that TBLT provides learners with motivation as they “want to know why they have been studying, and this usually means they want to know what they have learned” (p. 25), and Carless (2009) found that “TBLT is ... seen as potentially providing a more active role for students, and if implemented successfully, more motivating” (p. 62). Willis

(1996) stated the role of the task as “to encourage learners to activate and use whatever language they already have both for comprehension and for speaking and writing” (p. 147).

The key principle of TBLT is to organise the materials in terms of tasks that clearly measure the effect of using the language on learners’ output (e.g. giving presentations). However, Ellis (2003) identified a number of differences between tasks and exercises. One key difference is related to the role of participants (Ellis, 2003). In doing tasks, participants use the target language while communicating during real-life activities, whereas in doing exercises, participants learn the language. In short, tasks focus primarily on meanings while exercises focus on forms (Ellis, 2003). Although both tasks and exercises are ultimately focused on learning the new language, the purpose of the learning is different when doing communicative tasks and exercises such as grammar assignments. Ellis (2003) provided a list of the essential criteria for tasks, as follows:

1. A task is a workplan.
2. A task involves a primary focus on meaning.
3. A task involves real-world processes of language use.
4. A task can involve any of the four language skills.
5. A task engages cognitive processes.
6. A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome (pp. 9-10)

Skehan (1998) argued that a task has five main characteristics:

- (a) Meaning is primary, (b) learners are not given other people’s meanings to regurgitate, (c) there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities, (d) task completion has some priority, and (e), the assessment of tasks is in terms of outcome (p. 95).

Timmis (2005) identified two key principles underpinning noticing tasks in particular:

encouraging students to compare their expectations and the reality of native English speech, and encouraging students to compare what they want to say with what NS say. While Murphy (2003) proposed three key factors leading to successful TBLT: “the contribution of the individual learner, the task, and the situation in which the task is carried out” (p. 353), it is crucial to focus on at least one of these factors – the learner – to promote the effectiveness of TBLT for learning (Lai & Lin, 2013).

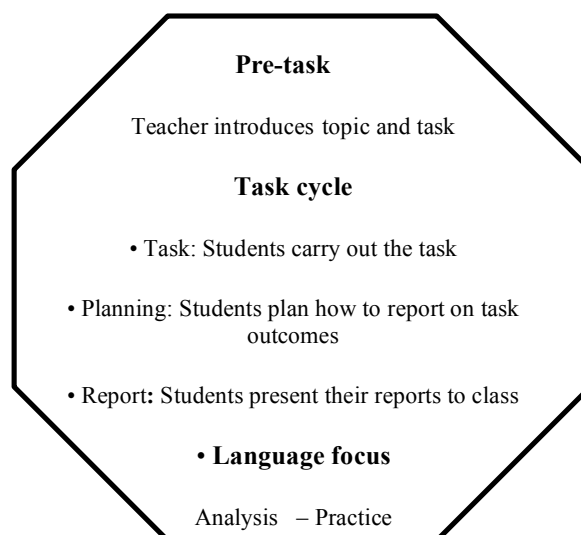
In brief, the current study seeks to analyse the task-based learner production of the target SDMs. As Ellis (2009) noted: “TBLT can be input-providing as well as output-prompting” (p. 224). Moreover, TBLT can be input-providing, by engaging students in listening or reading (in this case listening) and output-prompting by engaging students in speaking or writing (in this case oral presentation). Thus, it can be argued that performing tasks may enhance learners’ communicative abilities in all four language skills and affect their learning and acquisition of the target DMs in the current study. The next paragraph focuses on the popular framework for TBLT, which will be adopted in this study.

A well-known framework for TBLT was provided by Willis (1996), who identified three stages:

1. Pre-task stage (introduction to the topic and task);
2. Task cycle (task, planning, report);
3. Language focus (analysis and practice).

(Willis, 1996, p. 52)

These stages are illustrated and explained in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** A framework for TBLT (Willis, 1996).

In the pre-task stage, the teacher presents the topic and helps students identify associated vocabulary. In the second phase, performing the tasks promotes fluency. As Willis (1996) stated, “the role of the tasks is to encourage learners to activate and use whatever language they already have, both for comprehension and for speaking and writing” (p. 147). In addition, this “provides learners with the motivation to improve and build on whatever language they already have” (p. 1). The post-task stage focuses on accuracy, i.e. a focus on form, or the “language focus” (Willis, 1996, p.52).

## **2.9 Key studies on discourse markers**

Having provided a detailed description of the adopted teaching approaches in this study, this section highlights key studies on DMs. In the past three decades, a growing body of literature has been published on DMs. The studies are divided into four main sections and discussed respectively: i) studies focusing on the use of DMs, ii) studies focusing on instruction in DMs (explicit vs. implicit), iii) studies focusing on explicit instruction only and iv) studies focusing on DMs in the Saudi EFL context. See table 4 below for a summary of those studies.

Use of DMs	Instruction in DMs (explicit vs. implicit)	Explicit instruction in DMs	DM studies in Saudi EFL context
Fung and Carter (2007)	Aidinlou and Shahrokhi mehr (2012)	Yoshimi (2001)	<b>Use of DMs</b> Al-yaari (2013) Daif-Allah and Albeshar, (2013) Algouzi (2014)
Hellermann and Vergun (2007)	Hernández and Rodríguez-González (2008) (2013)	Jones (2009, 2010)	<b>Instruction of DMs</b> Al-Qahtani (2015) Alraddadi (2016)
Müller (2004)	Rahimi and Riasati (2012)		
Zhao (2013)	Sadeghi and Heidaryan (2012)		
Aijmer (2002)			

**Table 4:** Summary of DM studies

Table 4 list the studies focusing on teaching DMs in EFL settings, which were the starting point of this research. The following paragraphs highlight and review the studies illustrated in Table 4.

### 2.9.1 Use of discourse markers

A number of studies have been carried out on the use of DMs, such as those by Müller (2004), Fung and Carter (2007), Aijmer (2002), Hellermann and Vergun (2007), and Zhao, (2013). Müller for example, investigated the use of ‘*well*’ by German EFL speakers, and compared this to its use by American NS. The findings of the study demonstrated that in nine functions out of twelve, EFL learners used ‘*well*’ more than NS. Müller (2004) explained that the, “German speakers on average used *well* more than the Americans did in all functions except for three: to correct a phrase, to quote, and to introduce the speaker’s own opinion” (p. 1179). This result contrasted with the outcomes for the use of ‘*so*’ in the study. These findings are interesting because they differ from those of other studies, most of which have found that the use of DMs tends to be more frequent in NS speech than in non-native discourse, although Müller’s study was limited

to the use of two DMs: *well* and *so*.

Müller (2004) explained the factors affecting the use of DMs by German EFL speakers as follows: i) the DMs ‘*well*’ and ‘*so*’ occur frequently in German textbooks of English; ii) there is an “overuse of *well* in an attempt to avoid the German-sounding *so*” (p. 1157), and iii) “The frequency of translational equivalents for *well* in German discourse could be another influence on *well*’s frequency in the German speakers’ data” (p. 1180).

Another influential comparative study was carried out by Fung and Carter (2007) which examined the production and use of DMs by NS and NNS. They defined DMs as “intra-sentential and supra-sentential linguistic units” (p. 411). DMs in their study functioned the same way as in many previous studies. That is, they had no propositional or connective function in utterances. However, they had a vital function as they signalled changes in the development of the participants’ discussion rather than fulfilling connective or propositional purposes (Fung & Carter, 2007). Fung and Carter proposed a multi-categorical model comprising four categories, each of which described a function: interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive. They then specified five general characteristics of DMs under the headings: “position”, “prosody”, “multi-grammaticality”, “indexicality” and “optionality” (cf. 2.5), stating that these characteristics apply to linguistic expressions.

Fung and Carter used two different corpora: CANCODE, and recorded conversations of secondary students in Hong Kong. Using their findings, they argued that DMs function as “useful contextual coordinates” (2007, p. 435) in pedagogical settings for both native and NNS to structure and manage speech. In addition, they have a “fundamental role in spoken interaction” (Fung & Carter, 2007, p. 410). This research can be described as

comprehensive for two reasons: first, it gave clear and simplified functional categories covering a range of DMs, in contrast to the limited focus of Schiffrin's (1987) study; second, it provided a clear description of the characteristics of DMs (see section 2.5).

A significant in-depth study conducted by Aijmer (2002) provided a descriptive framework for DMs, employing the term "discourse particles" (p.1). She argued that "if a particle expresses anything at all, it must be a procedural meaning" (Aijmer, 2002, p. 16), which echoes many researchers who have asserted that DMs have no propositional meaning. Aijmer (2002) proposed two "macro levels": "textual" and "interpersonal" on which discourse particles can be analysed (p. 13). She claimed that DMs have functions in discourse on both an interpersonal level (attitudes and participants) and a textual level (text), and that these are context specific. In this way, Aijmer's (2002) findings were similar to those of Fung and Carter (2007), and demonstrated that the same DM has different uses, which are dependent on the speaker's thoughts and attitudes, and the particular context.

Hellermann and Vergun (2007) concentrated on three specific interpersonal DMs: well, you know, and I mean, investigating their use and function by beginner adult EFL learners who were not taught explicitly. They found various functions of these DMs in the discourse, such as the use of like. Then, they divided the functions for the use of like in their study into three categories: "focus", "loose interpretation/approximation", and "exemplifier" (p. 169). The results revealed that the adult learners used DMs less frequently than NS, in line with the findings of previous research. In addition, Hellermann and Vergun (2007) argued that, "while teachers need not spend significant parts of their class time teaching these DMs, there is a need to make learners aware of these markers and their pragmatic functions" (p. 177). They also believed that English language teachers



should use examples from natural everyday conversations between NS to highlight the proper use of these markers and explain the reason why they do not occur in some settings. In addition, they stated that raising learners' awareness and providing opportunities for practice within the classroom would help learners access these markers in appropriate situations outside the classroom, aiding linguistic transition into US culture (Hellermann & Vergun, 2007).

A recent comparative study by Zhao (2013) examined differences in the use of DMs in speech by Chinese EFL learners, and explored "the relationship between English proficiency and the pragmatic fossilization of DMs" (p. 707), comparing this to DM use by NS. The results of the study demonstrate that the pragmatic fossilization of DMs occurs because language learners fail to grasp their pragmatic functions. In addition, the study identified a lack of awareness in the Chinese learners of the significance of using these markers in building textual coherence. Thus, Zhao (2013) argued that DMs should be taught using both explicit and implicit instruction within the classroom. He also argued, with regard to relevance theory, textual coherence of DMs should be provided through explicit instruction. In addition, he suggested that "teachers should provide learners with accurate and appropriate second language (L2) input and as many chances as possible to make enough L2 output in proper situation" (p. 707). Moreover, using the "relevance theoretical framework to instruct the teaching of DMs helps learners acquire the pragmatic function of DMs effectively" (Zhao, 2013, p. 707). In addition, Zhao (2013) noted that, DMs helped the speaker in organizing the ideas, producing explicit utterances and finally lead the hearer towards intentional interpretation.

### 2.9.2 Explicit vs. implicit teaching

Hernández and Rodríguez-González (2013) carried out a comparative study in relation to the acquisition of DMs by Spanish students. They studied two groups of Spanish students in their fifth semester. Table 5 below summarises the differences between the experimental and control groups.

Experimental Group	Control Group
Explicit instruction and input flooding	Input flooding only
Explicit information concerning DMs	No explicit information
Flooding of written input (containing DMs)	No flooding of written input
Communicative practice	Communicative practice
Feedback on DMs	No feedback on DMs

**Table 5:** Acquisition of discourse markers by Spanish students

For their study, Hernández and Rodríguez-González (2013) defined input flooding as the process whereby students receive a “flood of written input containing the target forms” (p. 3). The outcomes of their research showed that both forms of instruction (explicit and implicit) had a positive effect on the students’ use of DMs. However, the findings also indicated that explicit teaching integrated with input flooding was more influential than implicit teaching when using DMs for structuring speech (Hernández & Rodríguez-González, 2013). The authors argued that “explicit instruction can be a powerful tool for making L2 learners aware of new form-meaning relationships and promoting their subsequent use in speaking tasks” (p. 26).

Moreover, a number of studies examined the impact of DMs instruction on different language skills in an EFL context. For instance, Sadeghi and Heidaryan (2012) investigated the effect of teaching pragmatic DMs on EFL learners’ listening comprehension, and whether specific DM instruction could improve learners’ listening

comprehension in academic speech. The results of their study revealed that the experimental and control groups performed differently in both tests (pre-test and post-test). The researchers noted that instruction benefited the EFL learners, and they asserted that teaching DMs “will improve students’ ability to cope with content information provided in lectures” (Sadeghi and Heidaryan, 2012, p. 172).

In a similar study, Aidinlou and Shahrokhi mehr (2012) explored teaching textual DMs for the improvement of writing skills, and examined the impact of DM instruction on students’ writing abilities, as well as coherence at the pragmatic level. They found that teaching DMs helped to raise the learners’ awareness of discourse and enhance their writing levels; therefore, they argued that more attention should be paid to teaching text markers to learners, because “When we are planning to write a well-organized text, cohesion and coherence must be taken into consideration” (p. 10).

Coherence in speaking is as significant as in writing. Thus, it can be argued that to give a good oral presentation, learners should use cohesive devices (DMs) which will enhance the flow and coherence of the speech. In addition, Aidinlou and Shahrokhi mehr (2012) found that “explicit teaching of DMs seems to influence all language skills since they are important components of language” (p. 15). As Innajih (2007), cited in Aidinlou and Shahrokhi mehr, (2012) stated, teaching DMs explicitly to EFL learners has a positive impact on the students’ language skills, which is clearly demonstrated by the studies discussed above. As such, teachers should pay more attention to teaching these markers. Some classroom research, such as a study conducted by Rahimi and Riasati (2012), has investigated the effects of explicit vs. implicit instruction of interpersonal DMs on students’ oral output. In their research, Rahimi and Riasati (2012) found that students in the experimental group (who received explicit instruction) used DMs more frequently

than students in the control group. Thus, they concluded that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit. Furthermore, they argued that the means of achieving native-like language is through the use of interpersonal DMs, which they defined as a “group of cohesive devices that cause the cohesion and smoothness of language” (Rahimi & Riasati, 2012, p. 70). Rahimi and Riasati’s study is relevant to the current study in a number of ways. First, the main focus is learners’ oral output/ production of the target DMs. Second, their definition of DMs provided key reason for using SDMs in my study.

The arguments discussed in this section suggest that using DMs appropriately in speech will help learners speak naturally. Furthermore, in highlighting the significance of DMs in enhancing the naturalness and coherence of speech, the studies also emphasize the importance of teaching DMs explicitly in EFL classes.

The three studies discussed here (Aidinlou & Shahrokhi mehr, 2012; Rahimi & Riasati, 2012; Sadeghi & Heidaryan, 2012) contain some similarities and differences. All were applied in the EFL context, included both experimental and control groups, and incorporated explicit and implicit instruction. All revealed the same findings, namely that explicit instruction has a positive impact on learners’ achievements. However, the primary difference is that each study focused on a different aspect of EFL learning: writing skills, oral production, and listening comprehension, respectively. In all studies, the addition of a delayed test would have been beneficial for measuring the long-term effects of DM instruction on learners’ language acquisition.

Jones (2009) carried out a small-scale study with two groups of ESL learners living in a native English-speaking environment in the United Kingdom, both of which were given the same DMs using two teaching approaches: III and PPP. The III framework is based

on the noticing hypothesis which, as Jones (2009) observed, enables learners to “notice” the language not “practise” it. In contrast, the PPP approach involves the practising of taught DMs in the classroom. Jones (2009) based his selection of the taught DMs on two aspects: first, they were high frequency words in British English; second, they represented a variety of interpersonal functions. The research design for the study comprised several different aspects and stages:

- Pre-test, teaching (III and PPP), immediate post-test.
- Learners’ diaries.
- Learners’ interviews (based on the usefulness of studying, practising and noticing).

(Jones, 2009, p. 9)

The results of this small-scale study demonstrated that PPP had a considerable effect on learners’ use of the taught DMs, and Jones (2009) noted that the “PPP approach had a greater impact on their use of target DMs immediately following the study” (p. 13).

Jones (2009) highlighted a couple of key findings: first, in both groups (III and PPP), more DMs were used in the post-test than in the pre-test; second, all the learners agreed that learning DMs was useful, and made positive comments in their diaries concerning the LA approach, but also found practice helpful. Therefore, Jones (2009) suggested that teachers “need to experiment with activities which allow learners to reflect upon and discuss aspects of spoken grammar and not always feel the need to rush into giving language practice, especially as classroom time is always limited” (p. 14). In addition, Jones (2009) claimed that a more comprehensive study would include large groups over a long period of time, incorporating a delayed test and the use of a control group with which to compare each experimental group and show the effect of teaching DMs on

learners' acquisition. It is important to note that this small-scale study cannot guarantee the same outcomes would happen with different learners (Jones, 2009).

A follow-up study carried out by Jones (2010) included the components of the more comprehensive study he had identified in his previous research (a larger sample, a control group, and a delayed test). In the later study, Jones (2010) discussed the reasons for teaching DMs explicitly and the effect of using two teaching methods for DM instruction. He (2010) argued that there are many reasons for teaching DMs explicitly, namely: frequency, usefulness, multifunctionality, lack of salience, and implicit testing. Moreover, that DMs have various useful functions, for example "showing listenership" (Jones, 2010, p. 85). Indeed, Jones suggested that students who fail to understand the main functions of DMs will experience greater difficulty in exchanging ideas, and that this will lead to communication breakdowns. In addition to exploring why DMs should be taught, Jones (2010) examined how they can best be taught. He investigated two approaches: PPP and LA, the latter was intended to help students notice DMs without practising them. The results of the study showed that the "PPP teaching approach lead to greater increase in usage of the target DMs in an immediate post-test" (Jones, 2010, p. 88). Finally, Jones (2010) concluded that "DMs are worthy of at least some classroom attention" (p. 89).

Jones' (2009, 2010) research provides a sound basis for the current study in terms of his application of two different teaching methods, but several factors should be taken into consideration. What works in an ESL context might not work in an EFL context, as ESL students are exposed to language use and practice (English-native-speaker environment) more than EFL learners. Jones (2009) based his selection of target DMs on the most frequent words in NS speech, which learners in an ESL environment are exposed to every

day. Thus, Jones' (2009) use of the LA approach was reasonable, given that the study participants were in a native-speaking environment; however, this approach may be less applicable in an EFL environment.

Most of the studies reviewed in this section focused on the use and frequency of DMs, and compared NNS with NS. The results of all the studies indicate that NS are likely to use more DMs in speech than NNS, and explicit teaching is the most effective way to teach DMs in order for the learners to notice and use them. In the following section, studies focused on explicit instruction of DMs were explained.

### **2.9.3 Explicit instruction in discourse markers**

Hernández (2008) investigated the effect of explicit teaching on Spanish learners' overall use of DMs, and the influence on interviewees, assessing their oral proficiency to establish the differences between explicit teachings with input flooding and input flooding only. There is little difference between this study and that of Hernández and Rodríguez-González (2013) discussed above, as both studies achieved the same results, namely that "explicit instruction combined with input flood was more effective than input flood alone in promoting students' use of discourse markers" (Hernández, 2008, p. 665). Hernández and Rodríguez-González replicated Hernández's original study in 2013, but this time they added a delayed test. They also increased the treatment time to two 50-minute instruction sessions, longer than in any other study.

Yoshimi's (2001) study examined the acquisition of DMs by Japanese learners. The results revealed the beneficial impact acquiring these markers had on the learners' output. They also demonstrated the significance of practice in acquiring the target DMs. In the study, Yoshimi (2001) argued that the "instructional approach enabled all the learners to

improve their ability to manage in target-like ways the most fundamental aspects of the task: openings, presentation of content and closings” (p. 43). Yoshimi investigated two groups (experimental and control) and each of them carried out a pre-test and post-test involving story telling. Learners in the control group received no explicit instruction. Whereas, for the experimental group, Yoshimi divided the instruction into five sessions and designed it as follows:

- a. explicit instruction (the use and the function of the target DMs);
- b. non-formal examples of native speakers;
- c. planning stage (non-formal production);
- d. communicative practice (natural/real performance);
- e. corrective feedback.

(Yoshimi, 2001, pp. 4-5)

Yoshimi (2001) concluded, explicit teaching was shown to be effective in terms of improving learners’ production and output. In addition, corrective feedback was an important stage in the study, as it focused on learners’ use of the DMs, and the organization and coherence of their speech (Yoshimi, 2001). In particular, Yoshimi argued that individual feedback on the production of DMs had a beneficial impact on learners. Thus, practice and corrective feedback played a significant role in the study’s outcomes (House, 1996; Yoshimi, 2001). In the following section, studies on DMs in a Saudi EFL context were explained,

#### **2.9.4 Studies on discourse markers in the Saudi EFL context**

This study focuses on the context of learning EFL, which can be defined as studying “English in one’s own culture with few immediate opportunities to use the language within the environment of that culture” (Brown, 2000, p. 193). As stated previously, despite the considerable body of studies on DMs, there is limited research on the



acquisition of DMs in EFL contexts. In addition, to the best of this researcher's knowledge, only a few studies have been conducted on the use of DMs in a Saudi EFL context. Those studies were divided into two main groups: those that investigated the use of DMs and those that examined the explicit instruction of DMs. To begin with studies that investigated the use of DMs, Al-Yaari et al. (2013) investigated the use of DMs in speech by Saudi EFL learners from public and private schools, and compared this with use by other learners and NS. The researchers (2012) used classroom recordings and applied a descriptive framework to analyse their data. They found that English DMs, such as *and*, *but*, and *also*, were the most frequent words in the learners' discourse. Unsurprisingly, the study revealed that the Saudi EFL learners used fewer DMs than NS.

The main weakness of the study by Al-Yaari et al. (2013) was their focus on school learners, which meant there was a lack of spoken language on which to base their analysis. From my experience as a teacher, most classes in Saudi schools are teacher-centred, based on teaching grammar and new vocabulary, and the class time ranges from 40 to 45 minutes. Thus, it could be deemed difficult to establish the use of DMs in classes in which there is little time or opportunity for conversation. Consequently, learners do not have the chance to practise English (especially speaking). However, in some private schools, learners are taught the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as extra-curricular activities, and they use American and British textbooks. Thus, research undertaken in private schools might yield more productive results, as there is at least some focus on speaking skills in English language education. Indeed, Al-Yaari et al. (2013) reported that "the use and/or usage of EDMs [English DMs] by Saudi EFL learners was inappropriate or incorrect most of the times" (p. 12), highlighting the example of *'and'*, which they found to be "misused in different positions throughout the recordings" (p. 12). Another study conducted by Daif-Allah and Albeshar (2013) who investigated the use of

DMs in paragraph writing by Saudi EFL learners in a PYP programme revealed that learners use of DMs in writing paragraph is limited to the following DMs ‘and, for example, in addition’. They also identified a number of reason for learners’ lack of DM usage which are: teachers, learners, exams and course materials.

However, with regard to studies focused on the explicit instruction of DMs, there are two on how DMs could be taught specifically in the Saudi context, one conducted by Alraddadi (2016) which reports on the pilot study phase of this research (see chapter 3) and another conducted by Al-Qahtani (2015) which investigated the effect of explicit instruction of textual DMs on learners’ reading comprehension skills. Al-Qahtani employed explicit teaching instruction without focusing on a specific teaching method, however, the experimental group in his study was introduced to an intervention programme in order “to familiarise Saudi EFL learners with the most frequently used DMs and develop their reading comprehension skills” (p.64).

The current study focuses on the effect of explicit structural DM instruction on giving presentations (a requirement in Saudi HE). The reason for this is that most of the studies undertaken thus far have reached the conclusion that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction in the acquisition of target DMs. Thus, the intention is to teach DMs as a focus of speaking in the classroom, applying three teaching approaches, TBLT, deductive and inductive PPP, and comparing them to determine which is more effective for teaching SDMs to be used in presentations in the Saudi context.

## **2.10 Summary**

This chapter has established the theoretical framework of the thesis. It presented an overview of a key terms adopted in this study. It also highlighted spoken grammar and

theoretical approaches to DMs. It provided definitions and characteristics of DMs, and outlined the target SDMs. It reviewed the main aspects of SLA theories. Teaching English in the Saudi EFL context was explained. It reviewed the three teaching methods employed in this study. Finally, it outlined the key studies on DMs. The next chapter describes the pilot study.

## **Chapter Three: Teaching structural discourse markers: pilot study**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the teaching of SDMs carried out in the pilot study. The pilot study explored the effect of teaching SDMs on EFL learners' oral presentations. Specifically, the study investigated the overall production of spoken SDMs pre- and post-instruction in two groups of learners when two different teaching methods were employed: TBLT approach and the PPP approach. The primary aim of the pilot study was to be a foundation of the main study, as well as to examine and test the research methods and make any changes before conducting the main study. The following sections describe the context of the study and aims in section 3.2; the study design and methodology in section 3.3; participants and sample size in section 3.4; target DMs and the study application in section 3.5; it also summarises the content and the design of the pilot study in section 3.6, before presenting a review of data collection method and data analysis in section 3.7; an analysis of results of the first and second research questions in section in section 3.8 and 3.9 respectively; the results and discussion of the study findings in section 3.10; and implications of the pilot study findings for the main study in section 3.11.

### **3.2 Context of the study and study aims**

The study was conducted on foundation year students attending Taibah University in Madinah, Saudi Arabia. The Foundation English course is a compulsory programme for all foundation year students in Saudi Arabia. At the beginning of the semester, learners undergo an assessment to ascertain their English proficiency, and are differentiated according to the results. For this study, the researcher selected students with B2 level (upper-intermediate) English proficiency. Level B2 is based on the Common European Framework of Reference Ability Scale (CEFR). During the EFL programmes, students

are evaluated in relation to four skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. This means that they have the motivation to learn English, because they need to pass the assessment and develop confidence in giving presentations throughout their academic lives.

The key aim of the pilot study was exploratory, as well as to obtain primary answers to the research questions, as explained in the introduction to this chapter. In addition, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi EFL higher education context help students to learn and use them effectively?
2. Which teaching method has a greater impact upon acquisition (PPP or TBLT)?

Firstly, the study explored which SDMs the participants used when giving presentations in pre-test English speaking classes, in order to examine the progress of the learners' DM use throughout the whole teaching period. Secondly, it investigated which DMs the Saudi learners used after instruction in the immediate post-test and in the delayed test which occurred four weeks after the instruction. Finally, by carrying out a comparative analysis between TBLT and PPP, the study sought to identify which teaching method was more effective and why. The study also investigated that teaching SDMs is important, and that applying these talk units could lead to more structured and coherent presentations. In conducting the pilot study, the researcher aimed to help students become active, effective, and better learners during their academic lives.

### **3.3 Study design and methodology**

As indicated above the pilot study aimed to examine the effect of two different teaching methods on the acquisition of spoken DMs. The pilot study consisted of classroom research in the form of experiments. Thus, a quantitative research method was used in the

pilot study to collect data and answer the research questions. This involved two experimental groups receiving explicit instruction for the same input. The key difference between the two groups was the teaching method used to give the instruction. The first group was taught using TBLT approach, and the second group was taught using the PPP approach. Both TBLT and PPP were implemented by the researcher to ensure each was applied appropriately and changes in lesson procedures or teaching styles were avoided. Each group was taught for two hours a day for five days.

The study consisted of three main stages. First, it explored which DMs the Saudi EFL learners used when giving presentations in English speaking classes (pre-test). Second, it examined the DMs learners used in presentations after instruction (immediate post-test), in order to measure the effect of each teaching method on learning, and the DMs used by the students in presentations given four weeks after instruction (delayed test), to measure the effect of these markers on language acquisition. Finally, a comparative analysis between TBLT and PPP groups was conducted in order to determine which teaching method was more effective and why. Furthermore, the instruction given to both groups was explicit and focused on a set of SDMs and the acquisition of these markers through the practice of giving presentations. As such, both groups were taught the same target DMs (See Table 2). The teaching material was designed by the researcher to ensure it was relevant to their culture. In brief, five lessons were produced by the researcher to cover the five target functions of the SDMs. All presentations (pre-instruction, post-instruction, and delayed post-instruction) were recorded, transcribed and analysed by the researcher (for data analysis, see section 3.7 and 3.8), and the progress of learners' use of DMs throughout the whole teaching period was examined.

Both the TBLT and PPP groups were given the chance to practise the taught SDMs in their presentations at the end of each class in the immediate post-test. In addition, there were two different teaching approaches used (TBLT and the PPP) were described in Chapter 4 (Methodology Chapter) in detail. The phases of the TBLT lessons followed Willis's (1996) aforementioned framework, which proposed that a TBLT lesson plan should consist of three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. An important feature of TBLT is the pursuit of fluency and then accuracy.

According to Willis (1996), "the task cycle is central to the framework" (p. 52). In the TBLT group, in the pre-task stage, the teacher introduces and defines the topic, elicits information and vocabulary in order to prepare learners for the task ahead, and finally sets up the topic and task. As part of the task cycle, learners were asked to prepare and think of ideas and report the task outcomes to the class. In the language focus stage, they were asked to listen to an example of a good presentation, compare it to their presentations and identify the DMs. Finally, they were asked to repeat the performance of their own presentation.

The stages in the PPP approach were based on Thornbury's (2006) description, of PPP. The approach was applied deductively, whereby learners were exposed to the DMs in the presentation stage, when the teacher explained them and provided students with examples. In the second stage (practice), learners were given a transcript with the DMs that had been partly blanked out. They discussed what they thought was missing, and then listened to the audio presentation and filled in the missing words. Finally, in the third stage (production), learners were asked to write and produce their own presentations in groups, using the target DMs.

In brief, the TBLT group was different from the PPP group in that it was taught indirectly (inductively), whereby learners were exposed to the productive tasks before the receptive ones. Furthermore, they had to complete the task cycle before raising their attention to DMs (after carrying out the receptive task which contained the target forms). In addition, learners had to discover the target forms (DMs) by identifying the differences between the productive task and the receptive task. Learners were taught directly (deductively) in the PPP approach group, they were exposed to the DMs in the presentation stage and required to carry out the receptive tasks before the productive ones. As previously mentioned, the key difference between TBLT and deductive PPP is that TBLT aims to develop fluency and then accuracy, while deductive PPP aims to develop accuracy and then fluency (See Table 6 for the differences between TBLT and PPP).

<b>TBLT method</b>	<b>PPP approach</b>
Inductive	Deductive
Interaction hypothesis + output hypothesis	Skill-building model + output hypothesis
Output-based tasks (giving presentations)	Output-based tasks (giving presentations)
Explicit indirect instruction	Explicit direct instruction
Fluency to accuracy	Accuracy to fluency
Strong version of CLT	Weak version of CLT

**Table 6:** TBLT and PPP differences

### **3.4 Participants and sample size**

The pilot study used volunteers from two different English classes. A total of 41 female EFL learners, their ages ranged from 18 to 20 years, from the foundation program participated and, as previously mentioned, they had previously undertaken the Oxford



Online Placement Test and had been placed in upper intermediate classes, as indicated in section 3.2, equivalent to the B2 level on the CEFR Ability Scale at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. Learners were divided into two groups: the TBLT group contained 21 students whereas, the PPP group consisted of 20 students.

The level of students' language skill was essential in drawing a strong and informative conclusion. This specific level was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, TBLT cannot be applied with low-level learners (Burton, 2002; Swan, 2005; Carless, 2009). Secondly, learners at the B2 level are able to think, write, and produce presentations in the target language (CEFR, 2011).

The PPP approach was chosen for the pilot study because it is a simple and easy structure for both learner and teacher so learners in the first year of HE are familiar with it. However, TBLT was applied in this study because it is more appropriate for use in EFL university settings where students have a strong background in English. The researcher sought to compare the two teaching methods in order to determine which works better in this context.

Participant selection was conducted at the beginning of the study and based on Dörnyei's (2007) concept of "purposeful sampling" (p. 98), which is the choice of specific participants. The teachers at the university allowed the researcher access to their classes, and asked for volunteers. Many scholars have recommended that for "comparative and experimental procedures [there should be] at least 15 participants in each group" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 99-100). Thus, the sample used in the study was acceptable.

### **3.5 Target structural discourse markers and study application**

The target DMs were selected for the pilot study on the basis of their structural function and suitability for use in presentations, making speech more coherent and fluid. Due to the short teaching time (ten hours), a limited number of target DMs was used (see Table 7, below, for DMs and their functions). The instruction comprised five, two-hour lessons over the two-week period, coming to a total of 10 hours for each group. Based on the function of SDMs, five topics were selected, designed, and implemented by the researcher. The teaching materials consisted of five lessons, designed in different ways to suit the TBLT and PPP groups, intended to teach the learners 20 SDMs explicitly for five different functions: sequencing, opening and closing conversation, giving examples, topic shifting, and summarizing. A pre-test was conducted in order to measure the learners' use of DMs before instruction, and to compare DM use in learners' presentations in the post-test and delayed test. In each lesson, learners were split into groups of four, in which they discussed the selected topic and wrote a presentation. All presentations were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed for further comparison. In addition, at the end, learners were provided with a handout for future reference which included the taught DMs and their functions, as they will need them when creating future presentations. Four weeks after, a delayed test was conducted by the principal teachers of the classes, after they had been given clear instructions about how to carry out and record these tests.

The pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed tests were conducted to investigate whether teaching SDMs affects EFL presentation production. This was measured by finding the mean and the gain scores for the target DMs in each group's presentation. In addition, lesson procedures were created to fit both TBLT and PPP approaches (See Table 8 for details).

Lesson	Function	Structural discourse markers	Examples
<b>One</b>	Sequencing	First, second, next, then, and finally	<b>First</b> , changing driving habits...
<b>Two</b>	Opening a topic	Let's start, now, right, ok	<b>Let's start</b> by drawing a mind map for planning a party.
	Closing a topic	Right, ok	<b>Right</b> , I think this is everything I need for this party.
<b>Three</b>	Giving examples	For example, like	<b>For example</b> , bags, shoes, clothes, etc.
<b>Four</b>	Topic shifts	Well, so, now, let's move on to, let's turn to	<b>Let's turn to</b> the wedding preparations.
<b>Five</b>	Summarizing	To conclude, so	<b>To conclude</b> , both ways of shopping (online and offline) have benefits and disadvantages.

**Table 7.** Target SDMs and their functions

TBLT	PPP
<p><b>Pre-task</b> Introduce and define the topic. Elicit information and vocabulary in order to prepare learners for the task ahead. Set up the topic.</p> <p><b>Task cycle</b> Complete a decision-making task Think of ideas. Plan how to report the task outcomes to the class (e.g. oral presentation)</p> <p><b>Post-task</b> Listen and look at a transcript of a good presentation. Compare to your own task. Repeat the presentation.</p>	<p><b>Presentation</b> 1. Explain DMs for sequencing function. 2. Provide learners with examples in order to illustrate the use of DMs</p> <p><b>Practice</b> 1. Give students a transcript with the DMs in the dialogue blanked out. They discuss what they think is missing from each space. They then listen and check. 2. Ask students to identify five things they would like to change and discuss them in groups of five, and advise them to use the DMs in their discussion (write DMs on board or on cards).</p> <p><b>Production</b> 1. Ask students to write a presentation together using the taught DMs. 2. Ask students to deliver their presentation in front of the class. Teacher gives feedback.</p>

**Table 8.** Sample lesson procedures: TBLT and PPP (pilot study)

### **3.6 Summary**

This section has highlighted the context, aims, design and methodology of the pilot study, which was focused on teaching SDMs in EFL classrooms using two different teaching approaches: TBLT approach and the PPP approach. It has also discussed briefly participants, sample size and target DMs

The following section explains the three tests (pre-instruction, immediate post-instruction, and second delayed post-instruction) used in the pilot study to measure the effect of both teaching approaches on the learning and acquisition of the target DMs, and which way of teaching worked better in this context. Furthermore, it presents an analysis and discussion of the pilot study findings.

### **3.7 Introduction to quantitative data collection and analysis**

Data analysis was performed using SPSS to conduct independent sample t-tests in order to identify the mean of the total scores of DMs and the gain scores for each group. In order to compare the findings of the two groups, the researcher assumed them to be what Dörnyei (2007) termed “independent samples” (p. 215).

The groups were split into four sub-groups which were each given a group presentation task. Group presentations were held at three time points: pre-instruction, post-instruction, and four weeks post-instruction. English DMs were observed in the group presentations for the following functions: sequencing, opening/closing topics, giving examples, topic shifts, and summarizing opinions. The analysis of the quantitative data aims to answer the research questions identified in Section 3.2, above.

The total frequency of the DMs and the mean scores across the five functions for each group (PPP and TBLT) were calculated at each time point. Two independent sample tests

were performed. First, a sample t-test was conducted to investigate if the means of the total DM scores in the TBLT and PPP groups were statistically different at each time point; second, independent-sample t-tests were performed to investigate if the gain scores (post-test → pre-test, delayed-test → post-test and delayed-test → pre-test) of the TBLT and PPP groups were statistically different. The p-value was then used to determine the significance of the findings (if the p-value less than 0.05 of the Levene's Test for equality of variances it leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Equality of Variances). The purpose of conducting the first and second t-tests was to answer the first and second research questions.

### **3.8 Analysis of pilot results for the first research question (quantitative results - mean scores)**

1. To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi EFL higher education context help students to learn and use them effectively?

The first research question was raised to explore Saudi EFL learners' use of DMs when giving presentations in English speaking classes (pre-test). An immediate post-test was carried out following the instruction to measure the effect of each teaching method on DM learning, while the second delayed test aimed to identify the effect of each technique on the acquisition of the target DMs. The reason for doing so is to examine the progress of learners' use of DMs through the whole teaching period in order to find out the overall effect of each technique on DM learning. The first independent-sample t-test was implemented to investigate if the mean total scores of the DMs were statistically significant at each time period (i.e. pre-instruction, post-instruction, and second delayed post-instruction). Table 9, below, presents the results of the analysis of the mean total scores of the DMs.

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Pre Test	TBLT	20	0.55	1.504	0.843
	PPP	21	0.62	1.431	
Post Test	TBLT	20	2.95	6.065	0.341
	PPP	21	2.29	4.900	
Delayed Test	TBLT	20	1.65	3.558	0.002
	PPP	21	0.52	1.167	

**Table 9:** Results of the analysis of the mean total scores of DMs (pilot study)

Table 9 demonstrates that there was an increase in the mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test in both groups' performance. However, the TBLT group performed slightly better in the post-test than the PPP group, and the overall mean for the TBLT group improved considerably from 0.55 to 2.95, whereas the mean for the PPP group improved from 0.62 to 2.29. It can be seen that, there was no significant difference in the use of the DMs between the two groups. In the delayed test, both groups showed a decrease in the mean scores in comparison to the post-test. The overall mean for the TBLT group decreased from 2.95 to 1.65, while the mean for the PPP group decreased from 2.29 to 0.52. To conclude, the scores for the immediate post-test and delayed test were better in the TBLT group than the PPP group. Thus, the results of the first t-test revealed that:

- There was no statistically significant difference between the means of the total scores of DMs for PPP and TBLT in the pre-instruction phase at the 0.05 level (sig = 0.843). The mean of the total scores of DMs was 0.55 for TBLT and 0.62 for PPP. If the p-value/sig is less than 0.05 of Levene's test it leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis of equality of variances.
- There was no statistically significant difference between the means of the total scores of DMs for PPP and TBLT in the post-intervention phase at the 0.05 level (sig = 0.341). The mean of the total scores of DMs was 2.95 for TBLT and 2.29 for PPP.

- There was a statistically significant difference between the means of the total scores of DMs for PPP and TBLT in the four weeks post-intervention phase at the 0.05 level (sig = 0.002). The mean of the total scores of DMs was 1.65 for TBLT and 0.52 for PPP.

### 3.9 Analysis of pilot results for the second research question (quantitative results - gain scores)

#### 2. Which teaching method has a greater impact upon acquisition (PPP or TBLT)?

The aim of the second research question was to ascertain which teaching approaches (PPP or TBLT) had a greater impact upon DM acquisition and why. For this purpose, the second independent-sample t-test was performed to compare the gain scores of the independent groups (Dörnyei, 2007) and determine whether they were significantly different.

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Pre Test	TBLT	20	2.40	5.020	0.188
	PPP	21	1.67	3.596	
Post Test	TBLT	20	-1.30	2.793	0.250
	PPP	21	-1.76	3.767	
Delayed Test	TBLT	20	1.10	2.490	0.000
	PPP	21	-0.10	0.539	

**Table 10.** Analysis results of the gain scores of DM (Pilot study). N = participants. Mean = gain scores. Sig= p-value for the t-test.

Thus, the results of the second independent-sample t-test revealed that:

1. The gain scores for both groups demonstrated improvement from pre-test to post-test. However, in terms of statistical difference, there was no statistically significant difference between the changes in the scores for PPP and TBLT in the pre-instruction and post-instruction phases at the 0.05 level (sig = 0.188). The gain of DMs from pre-test to post-test was 2.40 for TBLT and 1.67 for PPP.

2. The gain scores from post-test to delayed test showed no improvement and there was no statistically significant difference between the changes in the scores for PPP and TBLT in the four weeks post-instruction and post-instruction phases at the 0.05 Level (sig = 0.250). The gain of DMs from post-test to delayed test was -1.30 for TBLT and -1.76 for PPP.
3. The gain scores from pre-test to delayed test decreased for the PPP group and increased for the TBLT group, so there was a statistically significant difference between the changes in the scores for PPP and TBLT in the second delayed post-instruction and pre-instruction phases at the 0.05 Level (sig = 0.000). The gain of DMs from pre-test to delayed test was 1.10 for TBLT and -0.10 for PPP.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that for the post-instruction and pre-instruction phases, there was no statistically significant difference between the changes in DM use for the PPP and TBLT groups. For the second delayed post-instruction and post-instruction phases, there was also no statistically significant difference between the changes in DM use for the PPP and TBLT groups. However, for the four weeks post-instruction and pre-instruction phases, there was a statistically significant difference between the changes in DM use for the PPP and TBLT groups. The change of DM usage in the TBLT group was greater than the change in the PPP group. Thus, the TBLT approach demonstrated a better long-term impact on the acquisition of DMs. To conclude, the second null hypothesis of the pilot study, which stated that the teaching approaches will have the same impact on learners' acquisition of DMs, is rejected.

### **3.10 Results and discussion of quantitative results**

The findings of the pilot study demonstrated that both the TBLT approach and the PPP approach helped learners to increase their use of the target DMs equally in the short-term.



This was evident in the immediate post-test following the instruction of DMs, which revealed an improvement in the overall mean occurrences of the target DMs and in the gain scores of both groups from pre-test to post-test. Furthermore, Fraser (1990) noted that DMs are highly beneficial guides for explaining the intention of speakers in communication, and the increase in the usage of SDMs from pre-test to post-test revealed in the findings demonstrates that learners produced more coherent presentations after instruction.

With regard to the effect of teaching approach on the acquisition of the target DMs, it is notable from the results that learners in the TBLT group demonstrated improvement from pre-test to delayed test. In addition, TBLT showed a slightly higher increase in gain scores from pre-test to delayed test than the PPP group who showed a decrease in the mean scores. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference in favour of the TBLT group. It could be suggested that the similarities in the mean scores between both groups in the post-test is because the learners were trying to apply the knowledge acquired in the lessons to their presentations. In brief, both TBLT approach and PPP approach demonstrated a considerable impact on learners' learning of the target DMs.

To conclude, applying the TBLT approach had a greater impact on learners' acquisition of target DMs than the PPP approach, which is evident from the results of the second delayed test compared to the pre-test (the TBLT group's overall gain scores of DMs were higher than the PPP group). Thus, although both TBLT and PPP influenced language learning positively, TBLT worked better in this context, as demonstrated by the longer-term improvement of the TBLT students. Indeed, as Carless (2009) noted, "a key risk in p-p-p is that it is superficially attractive, but not leading to long-term acquisition of the target grammatical forms" (p. 64).

### **3.11 Implications of the pilot study for the main study**

As indicated earlier, the purpose of conducting the pilot study was to test the research method. However, by taking into consideration its outcomes the following changes have been made in regard to research method and teaching approaches.

1. Mixed methods are used in the main study. According to Dörnyei (2007), “over the past 15 years, mixed methods research has been increasingly seen as a third approach in research methodology” (p.42). Thus, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed in the main study. Mixed methods help me as a researcher to draw a fuller picture of the importance of teaching SDMs in this context together with the effectiveness of implementing different teaching approaches. Similar to the pilot study, a quantitative method is used to measure the overall use of the target DMs during all stages (pre-instruction, post-instruction and delayed post-instruction). However, a qualitative method is added to the research design in order to enhance the results from the quantitative method as well as to get more robust results (Schmitt, 2010). The qualitative method is used for interviewing learners in semi-structured interviews. According to Jones (2009) this establishes “how effective a particular type of explicit teaching is ... we also need to ask the learners who are experiencing the instruction what they think about its effectiveness” (p. 87). Thus, students from each group were asked to participate in interviews and only four of them were selected. The reason behind this is to find out about learners’ perceptions and thoughts about the effectiveness of learning DMs, practising DMs and the implemented teaching approaches. It also helps to investigate and consider how the students used the target DMs to structure their presentations, and how using DMs affected their oral presentation. In addition, the interview transcripts were analysed qualitatively to establish their views on the usefulness of learning, practicing DMs and teaching methods.
2. The number of treatment groups was increased to three. The addition of an inductive PPP

group was in order to measure whether inductive or deductive teaching approaches are more effective. As a result, new lesson procedures were added for the inductive PPP group.

3. A second delayed test was added. Hernández (2013) argues that a second delayed test is important in measuring a learner's knowledge of the new DMs. Scores immediately post-test drop when measured on a delayed test. This means interpreting the post-test scores as a short-term learning while delayed test as a long-term learning (Schmitt, 2010).

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter revealed that both groups increased their use of the target DMs from pre-test to post-test, which suggests that both teaching approaches had at least a short-term effect on learning. However, the TBLT group performed much better in the delayed test (four weeks after the treatment) than the PPP group. Furthermore, the findings of the analyses of the gain scores indicate that the TBLT approach had a greater impact on learners' acquisition of target forms. However, it cannot be claimed that all learners acquired the target forms, as the main focus of the study was on groups not individuals.

According to Crystal (1988), DMs serve as the "oil which helps us perform the complex task of spontaneous speech production and interaction smoothly and efficiently" (p. 48).

Therefore, based on this quotation and the findings of the data analysis, it is apparent that teaching SDMs to EFL learners is important, at least to students in this context.

Demonstrating DMs as an integral part of any presentation, or more broadly in day-to-day conversations, is highly significant. In the pilot study, using the TBLT approach achieved a greater use of target DMs in the delayed test compared to the PPP approach.

The focus of this chapter was to form a basis for the main study by testing research methods as well as teaching approaches and deciding which works best and is more appropriate for teaching DMs, as well as which best enables students to internalize and

use DMs in this particular teaching setting. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the main study in detail.

## **Chapter Four: Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the methodology of the main study and describes the overall framework used. Wellington (2015) defined methodology as “the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use” (p. 33). The chapter begins with an explanation of the research paradigms adopted for this study in section 4.2. Then, it highlights the research questions and hypotheses in section 4.3. Next, it highlights classroom research and presents different teaching approaches adopted and used in the main study to answer the research questions as well as challenges, and the potential difficulties of conducting this type of research in section 4.4. The chapter also describes the study design (mixed methods) in section 4.5 and provides detailed information related to its holistic nature, including participants and sampling techniques, the target DMs. Furthermore, it provides an explanation of the quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures in section 4.6 and 4.7 respectively. It also highlights the transcription of both oral presentations and interviews in section 4.8. Moreover, it provides an explanation of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis in section 4.9 and 4.10. It explains thematic analysis and the process of coding in section 4.11 and 4.12 respectively. Finally, the ethical considerations of the research are discussed.

The selection of the teaching approaches has been informed by the findings of the pilot study, which revealed that TBLT worked better than deductive PPP. As a result, I decided to include an inductive PPP in this study to determine whether using inductive approaches (inductive PPP as well as TBLT) has a more positive impact on learning DMs than a deductive approach (deductive PPP).

## **4.2 Research paradigms**

This section discusses the theoretical frameworks that formed the basis for this study and the methodology used, including data collection techniques. This is achieved through a description of the paradigm adopted for this study and an explanation of why each method – whether quantitative or qualitative – was chosen. The section addresses three main points, as proposed by Creswell (2014). These are: the philosophical worldview, the basic ideas within this worldview, and how these shaped the approaches adopted in the current study.

Before beginning a discussion of the adopted paradigm, it is necessary to define what the term means. Miller and Brewer (2003) defined it thus: “Paradigm, from the Greek ‘paradigma’, meaning pattern, is a theoretical structure or a framework of thought that acts as a template or an example to be followed” (p. 220). Hammond and Wellington (2013) referred to it as “the dominant framework in which research takes place” (p. 116). In brief, therefore, the research paradigm is the theoretical structure underpinning a piece of research. It shows the stance of the researcher and why they have chosen a certain type of research method, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) argued that the research paradigm “represents a world view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (p. 107). Moreover, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated that all research is guided by ‘theoretical orientation’ and that good researchers should be aware of a theoretical base and use it to assist with data collection and analysis procedures. Thus, for any researcher, it is important to reference paradigms in order to link the choice of research methods to theories.

According to Creswell (2014), there are four philosophical worldviews: post-positivist, constructivist, transformative, and pragmatic. Post-positivism is also referred to as the ‘scientific method’ and ‘positivism’ (Creswell, 2014), while transformative theory purports that research includes an action agenda for reform that could change participants’ lives and where they work or live, as well as the researcher’s own life (Creswell, 2014). Constructivism is usually combined with the interpretivist paradigm. Finally, the pragmatic paradigm holds that researchers can use all available approaches in order to understand the research problem (Creswell, 2014).

Having reviewed and defined paradigms in general, the following sub-sections provide an overview of all theoretical paradigms in more detail. It also discusses the main research paradigm underpinning both the quantitative and qualitative methods used in this study. For the purposes of the following discussion, these paradigms are described as: positivist, constructivist, transformative, and pragmatic.

#### **4.2.1 Positivist paradigm**

Auguste Comte, a French philosopher, first introduced the concept of positivism in the nineteenth century (Cohen et al., 2007). Comte’s position was that “genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment” (cited in Cohen et al., 2007. p. 9). In the same vein, Hennink et al. (2011) noted that a positivist worldview is considered the basis for experimental and quantitative research in the social sciences.

Positivism enables objective measurement, because a researcher can observe a phenomenon and measure it in an objective manner, without affecting the data collection process in any way (Hennink et al., 2011). Thus, the “inquirer can, in short, be objective

and value-free” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 87). Furthermore, positivism is focused on measurements, which is why positivists claim to be objective in their research. Phillips and Burbules (2000, cited in Creswell, 2014) presented a summary of the main assumptions for the positivist position:

1. Knowledge is conjectural and truth cannot be found. This is why researchers may not prove a hypothesis but can fail to reject it.
2. “Research is the process of making claims and then refining or abandoning some of those made for other claims” (p. 7).
3. “Data, evidence and rational consideration shape knowledge” (p. 7). In practice, researchers gather information on instruments based on tasks completed by learners, such as the presentations recorded in this study.
4. In quantitative research, “researchers advance the relationship” (p. 8) between variables and show this in their questions and hypothesis.
5. A vital element of competent inquiry is objectivity. Methods as well as conclusions should be tested for bias in areas such as quantitative research validity, and reliability is essential.

A research approach proposed by positivists is that a study should commence with a statement of theory, and then collect data that may support or reject that theory. Then, based on the data collected and the theories posited, important revisions should be made and further tests carried out (Creswell, 2014). According to Hatch (2002), “Positivistic research is characterized by experiments, quasi-experiments, correlational studies and surveys” (p. 14).

#### **4.2.2 Constructivist paradigm**

A key approach to qualitative data is constructivism, which is usually combined with the interpretivist paradigm. Berger and Luekmann (1967), first introduced this position in



their work. Constructivists hold the belief that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). In other words, a researcher must understand the point of view of participants in order to investigate target phenomena.

Arsenault and Anderson (1998) emphasized that a vital assumption of qualitative research is that an understanding of the world can be obtained through conversation and observation rather than through experimentation. Consequently, quantitative researchers (positivists) are concerned with collecting data to support or reject a theory. In contrast, qualitative researchers (constructivists) are concerned with understanding the target phenomenon from different perspectives. Therefore, researchers in this position interpret participant meanings rather than start with a theory, as in positivism. Crotty (1998, cited in Creswell, 2014) identified a number of assumptions related to the notion of constructivism:

1. Participants construct meanings in qualitative research. Researchers use open-ended questions to allow participants to share their points of view.
2. “Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives” (p. 9). Researchers try to understand the context, collect data, and finally interpret their findings.
3. The generation of meanings is a social construct which arises as a result of communication with participants. Furthermore, the qualitative data process is inductive, as the researcher tries to obtain meanings from the gathered data.

#### **4.2.3 Transformative paradigm**

The transformative paradigm emerged during the 1980s. It was not informed by a specific body of literature, but a number of critical theorists, such as feminists, racial and ethnic

minorities, and persons with disabilities (Creswell, 2014). Transformative theory purports that research should include an action agenda for reform that could change participants' lives and where they work or live as well as the researcher's own life (Creswell, 2014). Thus, they believe in the transformative approach. Mertens (2010, cited in Creswell, 2014) identified a number of characteristics of the transformative paradigm, as follows:

1. It is focused on studying the lives as well as experiences of different marginalized groups.
2. The research within the transformative paradigm focuses on inequities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation.
3. Using the transformative paradigm, researchers link social and political action to inequities.
4. Researchers use the "program theory of beliefs" (p. 11) to identify the reasons why problems of domination, oppression and power exist.

#### **4.2.4 Pragmatic paradigm**

The pragmatic worldview is derived from the early work of Pierce, Lames, Mead and Dewey (cited in Cherryholmes, 1992). Pragmatism originally emerged from situations, actions and consequences (Creswell, 2014). Researchers who adopt the pragmatic paradigm focus on the research problem rather than the research method. Thus, they are able to use all available approaches in their work (Creswell, 2014). According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the pragmatic paradigm "accepts that quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research are all superior under different circumstances and it is the researcher's task to make the decision about which research approach ... should be used in a specific study" (p. 22-23).

Creswell (2014) described the key features of pragmatism as:

1. Focused on the consequences of actions

2. Problem-centred
3. Pluralistic
4. Real-world practice oriented. (p. 6)

Creswell (2014) also highlighted the key assumptions of the pragmatic paradigm based on Morgan (2007), Cherryholmes (1992), and his own views. These assumptions are detailed below.

1. Pragmatism is not committed to one reality and philosophy and generally applies to mixed methods research which draws from both quantitative and qualitative data.
2. Within this paradigm, researchers can choose the method, procedures, tools. which best meet the purposes of their research.
3. In addition, researchers can use many methods of data collection and analysis rather than just one (quantitative or qualitative).
4. The purpose of using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) research methods is to understand the phenomenon under investigation in more depth.
5. Researchers who employ a mixed methods technique must identify the reason why both quantitative and qualitative research is useful for their work.
6. Pragmatists believe that research occurs in different contexts, such as political, historical and social.
7. Pragmatists also believe in an “external world independent of the mind as well as that lodged in the mind” (Creswell, 2014, p. 11).

In summary, the pragmatic paradigm enables a researcher to choose their own research approach. It also facilitates the use of mixed research methods, and different data collection and analysis tools. Thus, it provides researchers with many more opportunities

to adopt or add tools as needed, without boundaries or restrictions, in order to support and enhance study findings.

The pragmatic worldview states that the mixed methods research approach uses a “collection of both quantitative and qualitative data sequentially in the design” (p. 19). Furthermore, that collecting different types of data enables a researcher to obtain a full understanding and insight into the research problem or phenomenon under investigation. Indeed, Creswell (2014) asserted that “collecting diverse types of data best provides a more complete understanding of a research problem” (p. 19).

Thus, I decided that a mixed methods design would be the best way to understand the phenomenon under investigation in this study. Ultimately, an explanatory sequential mixed methods model was adopted. Creswell (2014) explained that “the researcher first conducts the quantitative research, analyses the results and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research” (p. 15). Table 11, below, shows the practices of the mixed methods approach within the pragmatic paradigm.

<b>Mixed methods approach</b>	
<b>Philosophical assumptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pragmatic knowledge claims.</li> <li>• Explanatory sequential.</li> </ul>
<b>Research method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.</li> </ul>
<b>Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect both quantitative and qualitative data.</li> <li>• Develop a rationale for the mixed method.</li> <li>• Integrate the data at different stages.</li> <li>• Present visual picture of the procedures.</li> <li>• Employ the practices of both quantitative and qualitative research.</li> </ul>

**Table 11:** Mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2014, p. 18)

The general assumptions that shaped the pragmatic paradigm have been clarified. However, the main reason for adopting this paradigm in this particular study was addressed by Creswell (2014). Firstly, it effectively underpins mixed methods research.

Secondly, “pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis” (Creswell, 2014, p. 11).

It is important to note how this paradigm informed the mixed methods approach used in this study, and the explanatory sequential model design (quantitative then qualitative). The study began by identifying the research questions and hypotheses (see section 4.3), and then moved on to experiments conducted on three groups, with the main variable being teaching methods (the quantitative stage). In this stage, the research was based on recording learners’ group presentations and measuring their use of the target DMs in their presentations prior to, immediately after, and three and four weeks post-intervention. It was also necessary to gather numerical data by calculating the total frequency counts (TFC) of the target DMs, and their mean scores. For further details on the quantitative methods applied in this study, see Section 4.5.1. Qualitative data was also gathered to support the findings from the quantitative data and provide an understanding of the problem under investigation, from the learners’ points of view. In this stage, it was necessary to explore participants’ perspectives and points of view in order to understand their opinions towards the studying and practising of DMs, and teaching methods applied during the study. Information was gathered by using interviews and exit slips, as detailed in Section 4.7. For details on the qualitative research methods applied in this study, see Section 4.5.2. According to Rossman and Wilson (1985) quantitative and qualitative data can be combined by using three different perspectives, one of which, the pragmatist approach, is adopted in this research. Rossman and Wilson noted that, in the pragmatist approach “either method can be used at the analysis stage to corroborate (provide convergence in findings), elaborate (provide richness and detail), or initiate (offer new interpretations) findings from the other method” (1985, p. 627). Furthermore, the

quantitative and qualitative data were combined by using triangulation of the findings which enabled me to answer the research questions. Richards and Schmidt (2010) described triangulation as collecting data from different sources (i.e. tests scores, interviews) using different methods (quantitative and qualitative), which helps the researcher in improving the accuracy of the final conclusions (Rossman and Wilson, 1985). Although, in this study, the primary source of data was quantitative, qualitative data were used to provide more details and richness to the quantitative findings (elaboration) (Rossman & Wilson, 1985).

This section has discussed all research paradigms in general and the research paradigm adopted for this study, and how that shaped the research methods used. The following section presents the research questions and the hypotheses this work sought to test.

### **4.3 Research questions and hypotheses**

The previous section discussed the paradigms that shaped the methodology for this study. This section focuses on the research questions and hypotheses. The main study sought to answer the following research questions, as detailed in the introductory chapter:

1. To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi English as a Foreign Language higher education context help students to learn and use them in their presentation?
  - Does the number of SDMs used increase from pre-test (pre-instruction) to post-test following DM instruction?
  - Do learners consider learning and practising structural discourse markers useful and why?
2. Which teaching approach, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive), or TBLT has a long-term effect on the acquisition of structural discourse markers?

- Do inductive PPP and deductive PPP have the same effect on the acquisition of DMs?
  - Is TBLT more effective than PPP in a specific context?
  - Do TBLT and inductive PPP have the same long-term effects on the acquisition of DMs in comparison to deductive PPP?
3. To what extent do Saudi EFL learners consider learning structural discourse markers via TBLT, deductive PPP, or inductive PPP more useful than traditional teaching methods?
- Do Saudi EFL learners consider learning SDMs via TBLT, deductive PPP, or inductive PPP more effective than via traditional teaching methods?

It is important to note that the research questions detailed above include a number of additions to the original questions described in the introduction. These were informed by the results of the pilot study, and the addition of a third group – the inductive PPP group. The first and second research questions were established to test the following two hypotheses:

**H1** - Teaching DMs would not make a difference in learners' presentation production and to all experimental groups.

**H2** - Teaching approaches will have the same impact on learners' acquisition of DMs.

This section provided an explanation of the research questions and hypotheses that this study sought to investigate. The next section discusses the nature of classroom research and the teaching methods.

#### **4.4 Classroom research, teaching methods**

According to Timmis (2012), "if we take the view that applied linguistics involves the interaction of theory and practice, rather than simply the application of theory to practice,

two further kinds of research will be useful: attitudinal research and classroom research” (p. 521). In addition, Ellis (2005) noted that instructed teaching and learning occur in the classroom where, “instruction can be viewed as an attempt to intervene in the process of language learning” (p. 9). Thus, this study was primarily based on classroom research and on collecting data from instructed classes.

According to a definition provided by Dörnyei (2007), classroom research is a “broad umbrella-term for empirical investigations that use the classroom as the main research site” (p. 176). As Dörnyei explained, this type of research involves both teaching and learning taking place within the context of the classroom. In this study, students were exposed to explicit instruction and taught the same DMs using different approaches, which were the baseline for comparison.

The study was based on explicit form-focused instruction which aimed at “helping learners develop explicit knowledge of the target structure” (Ellis, 2012, p. 17). Ellis (2012) also distinguished between direct and indirect explicit instruction. Direct explicit instruction is the attempt to provide learners with descriptions of the target forms, whereas indirect explicit instruction is the attempt to provide learners with data that explains the target forms and prompts their discovery (Ellis, 2012).

Thus, similar to the pilot study, the main variable used in the main study was teaching methods. The teaching frameworks were differentiated based on the application of each framework, whereby PPP was given both inductively (indirect instruction) as well as deductively (direct instruction), while TBLT is a form of indirect explicit instruction. In this study, the purpose of using different teaching approaches was to determine the effectiveness of different interventions in teaching DMs to NNS. Furthermore, this study



aimed to explore which teaching method works best and is most appropriate for teaching DMs, as well as which technique best enables the students to internalize and use DMs in this particular teaching setting.

The classroom research in this thesis was based on instructed SLA and focused on “how instruction makes a difference to the acquisition of a second language” (Nunan, 2005, p. 226). In brief, this study was based on three different teaching frameworks. The general aim was to determine the short- and long-term effects of these frameworks on the acquisition of a set of SDMs in a foreign language classroom. The TBLT, deductive PPP, and inductive PPP classes were taught by the researcher to make sure each was applied appropriately, and changing of lesson procedures or teaching styles was avoided. The following sub-section highlights some of the challenges and difficulties encountered in classroom research in general and how they can be overcome.

#### **4.4.1 Challenges and difficulties within classroom research**

Classroom research is complex because it involves dealing with learners who have different levels of motivation. Individual characteristics and learner willingness also play a vital role in active and effective classroom engagement. It is necessary here to clarify the challenges and difficulties of implementing classroom-based research, and how to approach and overcome them. Dörnyei (2007, p.188-190) identified ten challenges that researchers might encounter in the classroom. These challenges can be summarised as follows:

1. Meeting different needs and standards
2. The variability of the student body
3. The time-consuming nature of tasks
4. Working with teachers

5. Working with students
6. Unexpected events and interruptions
7. Obtrusive-researcher effect
8. Ethical considerations
9. Technical difficulties
10. Multi-site design

Some of these challenges were already encountered and overcome in the pilot study, such as working with teachers, whereby it was necessary to explain the teaching materials to them so they knew what would be taught to their students, and how the materials could positively affect learners. Another challenge encountered in the main study was the time-consuming nature of classroom research. A further significant challenge was working with students, as some of them were not willing to participate in preparing presentations with their classmates. They did not want to engage in the group activity, which left just two or three students to prepare the presentation. This was particularly the case for one group (deductive PPP) and came about due to low levels of motivation for this study within the group. However, the two other groups were better motivated and engaged very well in the class and with each other. Another challenge was an unexpected interruption, as classes stopped two days each week because students had exams every Tuesday. This is something I did not anticipate and know about until I went to the institution to arrange the timetable. Furthermore, the students did not have English classes on Wednesday and absence was often high on Mondays when students were preparing for the exams. On one or two occasions, it was necessary to cancel lessons, as the level of attendance was too low to proceed.

#### 4.4.2 Teaching methods

As highlighted earlier, the main study in this research focused on intervention-led classroom research in instructed SLA and used comparative methods to explore the research questions. Comparative method studies account for a significant amount of research into L2 classrooms that has compared the effectiveness of two or more teaching methods on the acquisition of a stated target. Table 12 below presents the differences between the three teaching approaches used in this study.

<b>TBLT approach</b>	<b>PPP approach (deductive)</b>	<b>PPP approach (Inductive)</b>
Inductive	Deductive	Inductive
Interaction hypothesis + output hypothesis	Skill-building model + output hypothesis	Skill-building model + output hypothesis
Output-based tasks (giving presentations)	Output-based tasks (giving presentations)	Output-based tasks (giving presentations)
Explicit indirect instruction	Explicit direct instruction	Explicit indirect instruction
Fluency to accuracy	Accuracy to fluency	Accuracy to fluency

**Table 12:** The differences between TBLT, deductive PPP, and inductive PPP

The main difference between the three frameworks was whether they were applied inductively (indirect instruction) or deductively (direct instruction). For example, target DMs were introduced to the TBLT group in the post-task stage (language focus) and learners were required to identify the differences between their presentations and the target presentation model (receptive task) and identify DMs. In the deductive PPP group, the teacher explained and introduced the target forms and provided learners with examples illustrating their use in the first stage (presentation), thus, learners were taught the DMs before applying them to their oral presentations. The inductive PPP group was also exposed to the target DMs in the presentation stage, when students discussed the main topic in groups and carried out group tasks, obtained feedback and completed a

listening task, thus eliciting the target words and their functions, hence, learners were left to identify the target words by themselves, before applying them to their presentation. Moreover, in this study, learners first produced the language in written form, by writing their presentation, and then in spoken form by presenting their work orally to the whole class.

In order to achieve the research objectives and overcome the potential obstacles within the Saudi context, the researcher created the teaching materials, ensuring they were interesting and relevant to the learners' culture. The researcher also designed learner-centred activities for the TBLT group. Finally, the study focused on improving learners' speaking skills and output through presentations.

An example lesson procedure explanation can be found in Table 13 and a sample summary of lessons is given in Appendix 1.

<b>TBLT</b>	<b>Deductive PPP</b>	<b>Inductive PPP</b>
<p><b>Pre-task</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce and define topic.</li> <li>2. Elicit information and vocabulary in order to prepare learners for the task ahead.</li> <li>3. Set up topic and task.</li> <li>4. Provide a model of how to perform the task.</li> </ol> <p><b>Task cycle</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete a decision-making task</li> <li>2. Think of ideas.</li> <li>3. Plan how to report the task outcomes to the class (e.g. oral presentation)</li> </ol> <p><b>Post-task</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listen again and look at a transcript of a better presentation.</li> <li>2. Compare to your own task.</li> <li>3. Find DMs</li> <li>4. Repeat performance of the task (presentation).</li> </ol>	<p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher explains DMs in terms of sequencing function.</li> <li>2. Provide learners with examples to illustrate use of DMs</li> </ol> <p><b>Practice</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give students a transcript with DMs in the dialogue blanked out. They discuss what they think is missing from each space, listen and check.</li> <li>2. Ask students for five things they would like to change and discuss in groups of five, advise them to use DMs in their discussion (write on board or have DMs on cards).</li> </ol> <p><b>Production</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask students to write presentation together using taught DMs</li> <li>2. Ask students to present presentation in front of class. Teacher delivers feedback.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students discuss in pairs/groups five things they would like to change in society and why.</li> <li>2. Give students a task to complete pairs to find five things your partner would like to change in herself and why (time limit of three minutes).</li> <li>3. Class feedback.</li> <li>4. Students listen to researcher and other people, carry out the same task and write down differences between the language in this conversation and their conversation.</li> <li>5. Give students a transcript with DMs in the dialogue blanked out.</li> <li>6. They discuss What they think is missing from each space. They then check.</li> <li>7. Ask students to find DMs (sequence function).</li> <li>8. Class discussion.</li> </ol> <p><b>Practice</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mix up groups, ask students to identify five things they would like to change and discuss them in their new groups. Advise them to use DMs in their discussion (write on board or have DMs on cards).</li> </ol> <p><b>Production</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After sharing opinions with other students, students return to their original groups and agree five things they would like to change and why.</li> <li>2. Ask students to write presentation together using the taught DMs.</li> <li>3. Ask students to present presentation in front of class. Teacher delivers feedback.</li> </ol>

**Table 13:** Sample lesson plan procedures (main study)

#### **4.5 Study design (mixed method)**

The design of this study was based on mixed methods. Creswell (2014) defined mixed methods research as “an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data” (p. 4). Quantitative research contains numerical data, whereas qualitative research consists of non-numerical data (Dörnyei, 2007). In the context of this study, the mixed methods was used to first conduct a quantitative measurement of learners’ usage of DMs and then to investigate qualitatively their perceptions regarding the usefulness of learning and practising DMs and the different teaching methods. One advantage of using a mixed methods approach is to enable a researcher “to achieve fuller understanding of a target phenomenon” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 164) and to obtain more in-depth results. Furthermore, mixed methods helped to maximize the validity of research as well as reduce the weaknesses of individual methods (Denzin, 1987, cited in Dörnyei, 2007). A detailed description of the validity of quantitative and qualitative research methods can be found in sections 4.6.1 and 4.7.1 respectively.

This mixed methods study followed the Creswell (2014) model, which is the “explanatory sequential mixed method” (p. 15) whereby “the researcher first conducts the quantitative research, analyses the results and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research” (p. 15). As such, this study contained two phases, the first being the quantitative phase and the second the qualitative phase, which were ordered based on their priority in the study design. The quantitative methods were implemented first to measure the overall use of target DMs during all stages: pre-instruction, post-instruction, three week delayed post-instruction and second delayed post-instruction. This was followed by qualitative data collection, in the form of interviews, to explore learners’ perceptions of learning and practising DMs and the teaching methods. The timing of the qualitative data collection was decided on the basis of the purpose of the study, as learners

were required to talk about their experiences of learning and practising the DMs and their opinions of the implemented teaching methods. So, the qualitative data were collected sequentially following the quantitative data.

Another qualitative tool used was the collection of written feedback from all students, to ascertain whether each teaching method was considered useful. Participants in the qualitative sample were the same individuals who participated in the quantitative sample (group presentations) because the main focus of this mixed methods design was to obtain more in-depth results by following-up on the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2014). The distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research are shown in the Table 14, below.

Quantitative data	Qualitative data
Based on meanings derived from numbers	Based on meanings expressed through words (spoken and textual) and images
Collection results in numerical and standardized data	Collection results in non-standardized data requiring classification into categories
Analysis conducted using diagrams and statistics.	Analysis conducted using conceptualization

**Table 14:** Distinctions between quantitative and qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 569).

In this study, the focus was placed on the vocabulary aspect of speech, because learners need DM vocabulary to give fluent and coherent presentations. This study also investigated the importance of teaching SDMs, and that applying these talk units in giving presentations could lead to more structured and coherent presentations. Furthermore, giving oral presentations is considered one of the key learner-centred activities in EFL classes that help to improve oral proficiency. According to Meloni and Thompson (1980), “oral reports prepare the students in a realistic way to take part successfully in their regular academic classes in which they will be required to give oral presentations,

participate in discussion and seminars, and take notes on lectures and discussions” (p. 504). Thornbury (2005) also emphasized that oral presentations assist in improving learners’ English language skills. Thus, group presentations were used in this study as the means of assessing learners’ learning and acquisition of DMs. The reason for choosing group presentations rather than individual ones was because it was a challenge to plan individual presentations, particularly with large classes and limited class time. As King (2002) observed, “Group projects with 4-5 students in one group will save class time, develop cooperative learning and reduce anxiety” (p. 408). Indeed, in this study, individual presentations were not possible due to the restriction of the class time, and the need to measure the immediate effect of each teaching method. Furthermore, King (2002) identified some problems regarding individual oral presentations, such as “face-threatening activity” (p. 1), and that “speech anxiety and limited presentation skills are the major problems that lead to learners’ oral presentations failures” (p. 2). Therefore, in order to overcome these problems, and in light of the research discussed above, group presentations were considered the best choice for this study. Hammond et al. (1992) identified four stages in the teaching-learning cycle, which are detailed below and were followed in this study:

**Stage one:** “Building knowledge of the field” (students discuss the topic and answer relevant questions)

**Stage two:** “Modeling of the text” (teacher provides a model of a good presentation)

**Stage three:** “Joint construction of the text” (students work together on writing and practising their presentations)

**Stage four:** “Independent construction of the text” (students give group presentations) (Hammond et al., 1992, p. 17)

In brief, this study sought to measure DM usage quantitatively using pre, post, and delayed tests in the form of oral presentation; and qualitatively by interviewing learners



and collecting written feedback. The chronological order of the study design can be found in Table 15.

<b>Chronology</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>Pre-testing</b>	Students gave group presentations (pre-test).	Identify how many DMs (if any) from the target DMs learners used in their presentations before the instruction.	Quantitative
<b>Treatment</b>	Experimental groups (TBLT, inductive PPP, and deductive. PPP) received ten hours of explicit instruction on the target structural DMs.	Pre-test, post-test, first delayed post-test (three weeks after instruction), second delayed post-test (four weeks after instruction),	Quantitative
<b>Post-testing</b>	Students gave group presentations (post-test) immediately after each lesson.	Find out the effect of treatment on learning (mean scores)	Quantitative
<b>Exit slips</b>	Teacher distributed exit slips after the last lesson.	Collect prompt written feedback from all students.	Qualitative
<b>Interviews</b>	Researcher interviewed four students from each group.	Investigate learners' perceptions and opinions.	Qualitative
<b>First delayed test</b>	Students gave group presentations (first delayed test) three weeks after the treatment.	Determine the effect of treatment on acquisition. (gain scores)	Quantitative
<b>Second delayed test</b>	Students gave group presentations (second delayed test) four weeks after the treatment.	Determine the effect of treatment on acquisition (durable learning), (gain scores)	Quantitative

**Table 15:** Study design (mixed method) chronological order

To summarise, this study first collected quantitative data, in the form of pre-test, post-test and delayed test scores and then qualitative data in the form of learners' interviews. For this purpose, the tests were conducted as group presentations. Then, the qualitative data was collected through interviews and written feedback. Having described the study design, the next section gives an overview of the quantitative and qualitative research methods.

#### **4.5.1 Overview of quantitative research**

Creswell (2014) defined quantitative research as “an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables” (p. 4). There are two quantitative data collection methods: experimental and quasi-experimental. The experimental method focuses on certain factors, including participants, materials, procedures, and measures (Creswell, 2014). A key feature of experimental research highlighted by Creswell (2014) is that it “seeks to determine if a specific treatment influences an outcome” (p. 13). Dörnyei (2007) defined typical experimental design as containing at least two groups. With regard to quasi-experimental design, Creswell (2014) argued that the procedure can be called a quasi-experiment if students are not assigned randomly. Similarly, Cook and Campbell (1979) stated that true experiments and quasi-experiments are similar in every aspect, except that in a quasi-experiment participants are not randomly assigned (cited in Dörnyei, 2007). Cohen et al (2007) identified several features of a true experimental study design, including:

- One or more control groups
- One or more experimental groups
- Random allocation to control and experimental groups
- Pre-test of groups to ensure parity

- Post-test of groups to see effects on the dependent variable
- One or more interventions delivered to the experimental group involving isolation, control, and manipulation of independent variables
- Non-contamination between control and experimental groups.

(p. 275)

Cohen et al (2007) argued that if the experimental design does not contain all these features, it is a quasi-experiment. However, the main purpose of this study was to identify the most effective way of teaching DMs in a specific context and with specific learners, rather than make a comparison between control and experimental groups. Therefore, there was no need for a control group.

An experimental study design only includes quantitative data, and must hold all the features detailed above (Dörnyei, 2007; Cohen et al., 2007), this study was a quasi-experiment not an experimental study, because it had no control group and it used a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) approach.

#### **4.5.2 Overview of qualitative research**

Creswell (2014) defined qualitative research as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). According to Mackey and Gass (2005), qualitative research is “based on descriptive data that does not make (regular) use of statistical procedures” (p. 216). Therefore, it can be said that it focuses on a description of the target phenomenon. In qualitative investigation, the researcher is someone who “describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2014, p. 14), usually by carrying out

interviews (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Qualitative research has a number of characteristics, as presented and discussed by Creswell (2007):

1. It occurs in a natural setting where participants experience the phenomenon under investigation, such as a classroom.
2. The researcher is the main instrument in collecting data by interviewing students.
3. It involves collecting data from different sources such as interviews, and providing additional supporting written answers for a particular study.
4. Data is analysed inductively by building themes and categories from the ‘bottom-up’ and then arranging data in a summary set of information.
5. Focus is placed on participant meanings and views.
6. The design of qualitative research is emergent, meaning that the design of a study cannot be described tightly and can be changed after the start of data collection.
7. It is important to frame the research with theoretical concepts such as the cultural, social or political context.
8. Interpretive enquiries in the research allow interpretation in the study.
9. The study offers a holistic overview of the target phenomenon.

One of the most significant aspects of analysing qualitative data is ensuring rigour, which can be achieved by following three precautions presented by Yin (2011):

1. Checking and rechecking the accuracy of your data.
2. Making your analysis as thorough and complete as possible rather than cutting corners.
3. Continually acknowledging the unwanted biases imposed by your own values when you are analysing your data (p. 177)

To sum up, qualitative research was used in this study to conduct interviews as well as collect additional information from written feedback.

This section has described the study design and given an overview of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The next sub-sections will focus on specific elements of this study design, including participants, sampling techniques, and target SDMs.

#### **4.5.3 Participants and sampling techniques**

Similar to the pilot study, participant selection for the main study was based on purposeful sampling, which is the selection of particular participants (Dörnyei, 2007). All participants were EFL learners with B2 level language proficiency, studying a foundation programme at an English language institution in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, they were all available to participate in the study at the required time, during normal classes. The Foundation English course is a compulsory programme for all students on the PYP. For the purpose of this study, volunteers were selected from three different English classes. Similar to the pilot study, the original teachers allowed the researcher access to their classes and asked for volunteers. The remainder of the class who did not volunteer to participate continued lessons as normal.

A total of 49 female learners in the PYP at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia participated in the study. As in pilot study, their ages ranged from 18 to 20 years because the university does not accept any students into full-time education who have held their high school certificate for more than three years. All had taken the Oxford Online Placement Test at the beginning of the semester, to determine their level of English proficiency and ensure they were placed in the correct class. For the purpose of the study, upper-intermediate students were selected, which is equivalent to level B2 on the CEFR, although some learners were lower than a B2 level in speaking skills, which is generally expected in

language classes. According to the CEFR (2001), a B2 is an ‘independent user’, and learners at this level:

Can understand the main ideas of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical definitions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options (p. 24)

The learners’ English level (B2) was vital to drawing a strong and informative conclusion in this study. Furthermore, this specific level was chosen for several reasons. For instance, TBLT cannot be applied with low-level learners (Burton, 2002; Swan, 2005 and Carless, 2009). Secondly, for the purposes of this study, learners were required to engage in discussions, share opinions, exchange ideas, and prepare, write and present their presentations to the whole class, and B2 students are generally competent enough in the target language to be able to think, write, and produce presentations proficiently.

Students undertaking the foundation programme at Saudi universities are assessed in the four primary language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Their speaking skills are assessed through giving individual or group presentations, which is considered an essential skill and forms part of the fundamental assessment criteria of the course. As a result, learners should have the motivation to learn spoken English, as they want to pass the assessment and develop confidence in delivering presentations throughout their academic lives.

The sample of the main study was made up of 16 students in the TBLT group, 16 students in the deductive PPP group, and 17 students in the inductive PPP group. This was in line with the size recommended by many scholars such as Dörnyei (2007), who stated that for “comparative and experimental procedures there should be at least 15 participants in each group” (p. 99-100). The 49 female learners were assigned to the three experimental groups (TBLT, deductive PPP and inductive PPP) receiving explicit instruction for the same input.

#### **4.5.4 Target structural discourse markers**

Due to the short teaching time (10 hours), a limited number of target DMs were used in the study. The instruction comprised of five, two-hour lessons over the two-week period, reaching a total of 30 hours for all groups. According to Norris and Ortega (2001), there are two different types of treatment in EFL learning: short which is generally for social purposes and lasts for less than two hours, and long which lasts for three hours or more. Thus, the treatment in this study was considered a long treatment.

Based on the structural function of DMs, five topics were selected, designed, and implemented by the researcher. The teaching material consisted of five lessons (topics) designed in different ways to suit all groups. Furthermore, all teaching material based on authentic resources and relevant to the learners’ culture.

In brief, five lessons were produced by the researcher to explicitly teach the learners 19 SDMs, related to five different functions: sequencing, opening and closing conversation, giving examples, topics shifting, and summarising. A pre-test in the form of oral presentation was conducted to measure the use of DMs before instruction, and thereby



enable a comparison of the use of spoken DMs in learners' presentations in the post-test (oral presentation) and delayed test (oral presentation). During the treatment and in each lesson, learners were split into groups of three to five, in which they discussed the selected topic and wrote a presentation. All presentations were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed. In addition, at the end of the treatment, learners were provided with handouts for future reference which included the taught DMs and their functions to keep them for their future reference, as they will be useful when giving presentations in the future. Two delayed tests were then conducted three and four weeks after the treatment by the main class teachers, who were given clear instructions of how to conduct and record these tests.

The pre-test, post-test, and delayed tests were conducted to measure whether teaching SDMs had an impact on the EFL learners' presentation production. This was measured by finding the mean and the gain scores for the target DMs in each group's presentations. The analysis of the gain scores of the DMs was intended to gain insight into the most effective way of teaching these markers in classes where English is taught as a foreign language, and into both the use and the function of SDMs in general. In conducting this study, the researcher seeks to help students become active, effective, and better learners in their academic lives.

Many of the DMs were used and taught by the tutor deliberately, ultimately prompting their use them in presentations. Furthermore, by teaching and focusing on DMs, students were able to complete meaningful tasks within the class successfully. Output was based on the interaction both between learners and their tutor and with each other; without the output from the activities and preparation of presentations in groups, it would not be possible to measure the production of DMs.

To sum up, teaching the target DMs is considered input, taking part in activities and preparing group presentations is interaction (incorporating output), and finally, the production stage or delivering the presentation provides measurable output.

Lesson	Function	SDMs	Examples
<b>One</b>	Sequencing	First, second, next, then, and finally (Fung & Carter)	<b>First</b> , changing driving habits...
<b>Two</b>	Opening a topic	Let's start, now, right, ok (Fung & Carter)	<b>Let's start</b> by drawing a mind map for planning a party.
	Closing a topic	Right, ok (Fung & Carter)	<b>Right</b> , I think this is everything I need for this party.
<b>Three</b>	Giving examples	For example, like	<b>For example</b> , bags, shoes, clothes, etc.
<b>Four</b>	Topic shifts	Well, so, now (Fung & Carter) let's move on to, let's turn to	<b>Let's turn to</b> the wedding preparations.
<b>Five</b>	Summarizing	To conclude, so	<b>To conclude</b> , both ways of shopping (online and offline) have benefits and disadvantages.

**Table 16.** Target SDMs and their functions (Main study)

#### 4.6 Quantitative data collection: tests

The main study in this research used two instruments to collect data, one being oral presentation tests. As mentioned previously, a pre-test, post-test and two delayed tests were carried out to determine the number of target DMs used by each group at each stage. Pre-testing was carried out for each group to measure how many of the target DMs learners used in their presentations before the instruction, and then post-tests were carried out for each group to measure how many of the target DMs learners used in their presentations immediately after the instruction, and then three and four weeks after instruction. The reasons for conducting each test are presented in Table 17.

<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Post-test</b>	<b>Delayed post-test</b>
Number of target DMs used, if any.	Same amount of time (10 hours) and attention given to each method.	Shows effect of treatment on learning.	Shows effect of treatment upon acquisition (durable learning).

**Table 17:** The reason for conducting each test (Schmitt, 2010).

The pre-test, post-test, and delayed tests were conducted on the group presentations, which were analysed for the amount of target DMs used, based on their structural function. With regard to how the analysis was carried out, see Section 4.9. These tests are well-established in quasi-experimental study design, as noted by Dörnyei (2007). Using them provided the opportunity to measure the main variable of this study, the teaching methods given to each group. The tests also enabled the discovery of the mean and gain scores in terms of usage and frequency. In addition, by using the mean and gain scores, it was possible to measure the significance of variance between the three groups. The findings from these tests revealed which method of teaching works best in this context, and provided answers to the first and second research questions.

The reason for using a post-test was to identify the immediate impact of each treatment on short-term learning of DMs. However, the two delayed tests were used to investigate the effect of each treatment on long-term acquisition. According to Schmitt (2010), immediate post-tests determine “whether the treatment had any effect”, whereas delayed tests are used for “confirming durable learning” (p. 156). Indeed, as Mackey and Gass (2016) noted, the advantage of a delayed test is that it “gets a wider snapshot of treatment effects” (p. 202).

The post-test was carried out immediately after each lesson, for five lessons over 10 hours. The first delayed test was carried out three weeks after instruction, and the second delayed test was carried out four weeks after instruction. The original intention was to

conduct the first delayed test after four weeks and the second delayed test at six weeks. However, due to the personal circumstances of the researcher, the study was postponed by four months and eventually commenced close to the end of the academic year when learners were preparing for final exams and as a result were not available. This necessitated changing the timing of the delayed test. However, it is hard to claim durable learning of DMs as a one week difference between first and second delayed test is not sufficient to make any claims. In sum, the scores from the second delayed test cannot be used to prove the durable learning. Nevertheless, Schmitt (2010) asserted that “there is no standard period of delay and that any delay beyond the immediate post-test is better than nothing” (p. 156). He also argued that “any delayed post-test of less than one week is likely to be relatively uninformative” and “a delayed post-test of three weeks should be indicative of learning which is stable and durable” (Schmitt, 2010, p. 157).

#### **4.6.1 Quantitative research validity and reliability**

To assess the quality of quantitative research, certain significant concepts should be highlighted and investigated. Broadly, these are validity and reliability, although Dörnyei (2007) divided quantitative research standards into three parts: reliability, measurement validity, and research validity, which are discussed below.

Reliability “indicates the extent to which our measurement instruments and procedures produce consistent results in a given population in different circumstances” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 50). In this study, the choice of statistical techniques was key to ensuring validity, reliability, and generalizability (Hatch, 2002), because the findings were based on numerical measures.

With regard to measurement of validity, Dörnyei (2007) stated that “a test is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure” (p. 51). In this study, tests (pre-test, post-test, first delayed test and second delayed test) were used to measure the usage and frequency of the target DMs in learners’ presentations.

Research validity concerns “the overall quality of the whole research projects” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 52) and generally consists of two types: internal and external validity. Internal validity is the “meaningfulness of the interpretations that researchers make on the basis of their observations” whereas external validity is “the extent to which these interpretations generalize beyond the research study” (p. 52). There are many factors that can affect the validity of a study. Dörnyei (2007) identified six potential threats to study validity, two of which were significant to this research: “practice effect” and “participant desire to meet expectation” (pp. 53-54).

First, practice effect is when “participants’ performance may improve simply because they are gaining experience in taking the particular test” (p. 53). However, the practice effect was a considerable threat to this study because the research involved a pre-test prior to instruction, repeated tests (post-tests) over five lessons, and delayed testing at three and four weeks. Thus, it was necessary to ensure that care was taken to prevent any impact of this effect on the study results. It should be noted that the test type (presentation) was the same over the whole period. However, lesson topics were different, and each group could decide their own topics for the pre-test and delayed tests. The presentations always followed the same format, and being group presentations delivered by five students, timed at between three and five minutes. This was intended to work against the practice effect, as learners were not able to rehearse or prepare their presentations in advance.

Second, Dörnyei (2007) described “participant desire to meet expectation” (p. 54) as a situation in which learners may attempt to “exhibit a performance which is expected from them” (p. 54). For example, in this study, students may have over-used the target DMs, or used the DMs in the wrong position or for another function. This is possible in any study, but it was important to ensure it had no impact on this research by following specific criteria for target form usage. The target DMs had to be used in the presentations in a precise way and for a structural function only, so when giving examples or summarizing topics. If a DM was used for another function it was not counted. For example, the DM *first* had to be presented as *first* in the presentation to be counted. If learners used *first of all*, it was not counted, as this was different from the target word. In brief, only DMs with correct usage and function were counted in this study when calculating the overall total and gain scores. In addition, to ensure that this study was as valid as possible, correct DM usage and the scores were reviewed by a research colleague.

In brief, using statistical data in this study minimized the researcher’s bias and the influence of the researcher’s subjectivity by following rigorous techniques when collecting data such as audio-recording presentations.

#### **4.7 Qualitative data collection: interviews and exit slips**

The second method used to collect data was the qualitative method of conducting short interviews to investigate students’ thoughts and opinions regarding learning and practising DMs, as well as the applied teaching methods. The interview data was used to support the findings of the quantitative data collection and obtain more in-depth results. The written feedback featured one question which all participants were required to answer anonymously.

Dörnyei (2007) claimed “the interview is the most often used method in qualitative inquiries” (p. 134) because it is applied in different contexts for different purposes. Dörnyei (2007) also noted that it is because “interviewing is a known communication routine that the method works so well as a versatile research instrument” (p. 134). According to Cohen et al. (2007), “interviews enable participants ... to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view” (p. 349). In this study, carrying out interviews was vital to understanding learners’ perspectives regarding learning and practising DMs as well as each teaching method. The selection of interviews rather than other qualitative techniques was also based on the nature of turn-taking conversation, which can lead to interesting answers and further routes of inquiry.

The main intention of carrying out such interviews is to obtain respondents’ opinions and views. The concept and purpose of the interview technique can also be examined in more depth. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) defined an interview simply as “a conversation that has a structure and purpose” (p. 5). There are two types of research interviews: individual interviews and group interviews, which are referred to as focus groups (Kvale, 1996). The focus of this study was on interviewing individuals.

The primary reason for conducting interviews in this research was to determine the usefulness of studying and practising DMs, as well as investigating the different teaching methodologies. Each participant was interviewed individually about their thoughts regarding the usefulness of learning and practising DMs, and the teaching methods. They were also asked about their understanding of the teaching methods and lesson procedures.

There are three main interview types: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Dörnyei, 2007). A structured interview is similar to a written questionnaire in that it follows a specific set of questions to be asked to each interviewee (Dörnyei, 2007). Unstructured interviews do not follow a specific guide, but the interviewer is expected to prepare between one and six open questions before the interview, and may find it necessary to ask more questions to obtain clarification or give encouraging feedback during the interview (Dörnyei, 2007). Therefore, the main difference between structured and unstructured interviews is the degree of flexibility. Structured interviews offer little flexibility, while unstructured interviews provide maximum flexibility (Dörnyei, 2007). With regard to semi-structured interviews, Dörnyei (2007) stated that this type falls between the other two. He also argued that most applied linguistics research is based on semi-structured interviews, which he defined as when “the interviewer provides guidance and direction ... but is also keen to follow up interesting developments and to let the interviewee elaborate on certain issues” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136). Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) identified the purpose of semi-structured interviews as “obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 6).

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study because the flexible nature of their format enabled the researcher to obtain more clarification from students and understand their perspectives, which would not have been possible with structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews meant that the researcher could prepare a number of questions prior to the interview, but at the same time extend them and integrate any new issues that arose during the conversation. Consequently, using semi-structured interviews gave the interviewer a great opportunity to deal with any emergent issues in more depth, while



giving the interviewees a chance to talk freely and contribute more explanations. The main reason for carrying out the interviews was to support the findings from the quantitative data and to help “understand the world from the subjects’ [informants’] point of view” (Kvale, 1996, p. 1).

Conducting a semi-structured interview requires creating a set of focused questions to follow precisely, but retaining some flexibility to allow the asking of further questions and provision of more explanations. Dörnyei (2007) asserted that the interview guide should be planned carefully and piloted. For this purpose, two pilot interviews were carried out to measure the functionality of the interview questions. From the answers gleaned from the pilot interviews, some changes to the research questions were made that made them more specific and helped to avoid repeated answers. Piloting the interview questions is of key importance to a study, because it is vital to see if the questions will work effectively, and to know whether they will produce adequate findings for the purpose of answering the research questions. The pilot interviews enabled me to change one of the interview questions as it gave me the same answers as another. In addition to that and to ensure the credibility of the answers given by students, one of the pilot interview questions was not included in the main study, because the lack of anonymity may have affected participant responses. The question was asked in an exit slip which required each student to answer anonymously.

This study followed a number of steps to collect the qualitative data. These were: designing the interview questions, conducting semi-structured interviews, audio-recording the interviews, transcribing the interviews, analysing, and finally reporting on the interviews. Although it was made clear to participants that the interviews would be

carried out in Arabic, one student gave full answers for some of the questions in English but the remaining interviewees responded in Arabic, including some English words in their answers.

The sample size was chosen based on a number of suggestions. For instance, according to Dörnyei (2007), a sample size of between 6 and 10 participants should work well in a qualitative study, particularly in interviews. However, Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (2003) argued that just a few participants is sufficient to be a purposive sample in qualitative research, since the key goal is to gain insights into a specific educational context not to generalize the findings. Moreover, Patton (2002) claimed that sample size does not follow any rules in qualitative inquiry; rather, the appropriate size depends on the purpose of the study and the nature of the research topic. In brief, it was decided that four interviewees from each group, in addition to two pilot interviews, would be appropriate. Four students from each group volunteered to participate in the interview process, which made up a total of twelve interviews alongside two pilot interviews.

Conducting interviews is similar to other research methods in that it has some limitations. Creswell (2014) highlighted a number of these, for example, “indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees, provides information in a designated place rather than the natural field setting, not all people are equally articulate and perceptive” (p. 191). Dörnyei (2007) also identified a number of strengths and weaknesses related to conducting interviews, arguing that most people feel comfortable with an interview, as it is a natural and acceptable way of gathering information. Thus, the strength of conducting semi-structured interviews is that the presence of the researcher allows for a flexible approach and helps them investigate any emerging issues, while having an interview

guide is of great assistance in maintaining good coverage of the field. However, the key weakness of conducting interviews is that the setup and actual procedure is time-consuming (Dörnyei (2007). Furthermore, the interviewer must have good communication skills for the interview to be successful, and the interviewees may present themselves with a better image than in real life, as the nature of interviews does not enable anonymity. Another weakness is that participants may be too shy and unable to express their own ideas and views, resulting in inadequate data. Conversely, participants might give out too much information, some of which may be useless (Dörnyei, 2007).

#### **4.7.1 Qualitative research validity and reliability**

In qualitative research, several words are used to explain the term ‘validity’, such as trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced a range of concepts in order to discuss the quality of findings, such as trustworthiness, credibility, conformability, and dependability. They argued that one of the most important aspects to ensuring trustworthiness is credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Cohen et al. (2007), cited in Winter, (2000) gave some recommendations for achieving research credibility, and proposed that “in qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher” (p.133). Thus, there are several strategies that can be followed to ensure the credibility of qualitative data. One of them (used in this study) is the triangulation of multiple data sources, such as interviews, exit slips and tests. As Johnson (1992) noted, “the value of triangulation is that it reduces observer or interviewer bias and enhances the validity and reliability (accuracy) of the information” (p. 146).

Based on this data, it is possible to build a logical justification for emergent themes and add to the research validity.

Gibbs (2007) suggested some procedures to ensure qualitative reliability, such as checking the transcripts to make sure no errors or mistakes occurred during transcription. In addition, Cohen et al. (2007) identified a key risk of using interviews, one that could affect the validity and trustworthiness of any study, that is, interviewer subjectivity. To ensure the validity of information gathered from interviews, the study should be as objective as possible. In other words, it should be bias free. Bryman (2012) described objectivity as when a researcher carries out investigations without recourse to personal values or ideas. In this way, using computer software when analysing qualitative data can be extremely effective for maintaining objectivity (see Section 4.10 for details).

The third data collection instrument used in this study was the distribution of exit slips (See Appendix 8), which is considered a qualitative method. Exit slips are a formative assessment strategy in which learners write responses to a single question. This informal assessment was used in the study to enable the researcher to identify learners' perceptions regarding the usefulness of each teaching method. The main reason for using exit slips was to obtain a written prompt to support the data collected from the interviews and gather feedback regarding the usefulness of the teaching methods. McKnight (2016) highlighted the importance of using exit slips when "assessing students' understanding of academic content or indicating student's comfort level or attitude about the material" (p. 194).

In this study, data was collected from the exit slips after the last lesson, when the students were given the exit slips with a single question, which was: 'Do you think the way we studied in the classes was useful to you? Why?/Why not?' The students were asked to

answer anonymously, because this gave them the opportunity to express their attitudes towards the teaching methods freely, and helped to successfully identify whether each teaching method was useful or not and explain the reasons for each outcome. As mentioned above, the question was not included in the interview questions because the lack of anonymity may have affected participant responses negatively.

Learners' attitude towards education is significant (Lewis, 1981). Lewis (1981) argued that:

Any policy for language, especially for the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those of are likely to be affected. In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitude of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes and of the disagreement. In any case knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to the formulations of a policy as well as to success in its implementation. (p. 262)

However, as learning English is becoming more common in Saudi Arabia, negative attitudes are perhaps becoming less prevalent, as evidenced by the growing number of language schools and institutions in the Kingdom. Furthermore, awareness of the importance and advantages of learning English is increasing. In this study, I considered it unlikely that learners would express negative attitudes towards learning English, especially as participation was not compulsory.

According to Dörnyei (2007) there are a number of question types that can be included in an interview framework, which are as follows: the first few questions, content questions, probes, and final closing question. The first few questions are to help

participants open up and relax, while the content questions focus on knowledge, feelings, and experience. They allow the interviewer to apply different probes such as using what an interviewee has said to elicit in-depth responses. The probes can also include clarification questions. The final closing questions are vital in allowing the interviewee to give a final comment or the time to add something important that was not covered by the questions. The interview questions were used only as a basis for these specific interviews (Dörnyei, 2007).

The semi-structured interview questions applied in this study were divided into two parts. The first related to the importance and usefulness of learning and practising DMs, while the second was related to the lessons and teaching methods. In addition, learners were asked in the interview whether or not they had given group presentations before. The reason behind asking participants was to gain further insight into practices in the EFL context and identify the factors (i.e. personal emotions, never done presentation before, language incompetence, fears) that may affect learners' performance in delivering the presentation. (Interview questions can be found in Appendix 2).

#### **4.8 Transcriptions of learners' presentations and interviews**

The transcription process began after the audio-recorded presentations and interviews had been collected. This section explains how the audio-recordings were transcribed. Before giving specific details about this study, it is first necessary to discuss transcription more generally. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) defined it as “constructions from an oral conversation to a written text” (p. 210). In fact, in this study, all learners' presentations as well as interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed for analysis. According to Dörnyei (2007), “the first step in data analysis is to transform the recordings into a

textual form” (p. 246). Furthermore, “recording is used solely to facilitate the transcription process” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 185). Lapadat (2000) described transcription as an interpretation of interaction or speech and as very time consuming. The learner presentations and interviews were transcribed by the researcher for this study.

The interviews were first translated from Arabic into English and then transcribed. A colleague of the researcher who is fluent in both Arabic and English was asked to check transcripts (two interviews from each group were checked, making a total of six interviews) in order to scrutinize the translated data and ensure the interviews had been translated correctly and accurately for the intended meaning.

As Dörnyei (2007) noted, spoken and written language are structured in different ways. Therefore, he suggested some strategies that can help to create the feeling of oral communication in written text, such as using punctuation, dividing speech into sentences, and polishing the text; all of which will help the reader.

There are many advantages of the process of transcription, one of which is to help researchers to understand the research data thoroughly (Dörnyei, 2007). However, Lapadat (2000) identified some issues that can affect transcription quality. The first was related to factors that should be taken into consideration before starting the transcription, such as making a good quality recording. Thus, the current study used excellent recording devices and ensured low levels of background noise. Other issues related to using audio recordings involve elements such as having clarity of purpose, because the researcher analyses, interprets, and makes decisions and judgements based on the purpose of the research.

There are different types of transcription convention, some of which, like conversation analysis (CA), pay close attention to details such as pauses, overlaps, and gaps. Lapadat (2000) described choosing the most appropriate convention for a study as “problematic”. According to Edwards (2008), convention selection is mainly based on the research questions, theoretical framework and nature of interaction. Dörnyei (2007) argued that “there is no ‘perfect’ transcription convention that we could adopt automatically” and suggested “following a principled ‘pick-and-mix’ procedure to select ideas from these” (p. 248). Similarly, Lapadat (2000) proposed creating individualized transcription forms and rules that suit the study purpose.

For the purpose of this study, a detailed inspection of the recordings like conversation analysis was deemed unnecessary. The transcription of each presentation followed a specific convention established by Carter (2004) whereby the entire presentation – including interruptions such as unfinished words and laughing – was transcribed, and student errors were not corrected. The presentation transcription convention used in this study can be found in Appendix 3. With regard to the interview transcriptions, as all interviews were translated into English, this study followed the suggestion of Lapadat (2000) and Dörnyei (2007), and employed a bespoke, basic convention. The interview transcription convention used in this study can be found in Appendix 4.

After the transcription of both presentations and interviews had been completed, the data were prepared for analysis. The quantitative data analysis and the qualitative data analysis are described in the following sections.



#### **4.9 Quantitative data analysis: SPSS software**

As mentioned earlier, the pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed tests needed to be analysed in order to determine how many target SDMs students used in their presentations. Dörnyei (2007) stated that data in a quasi-experimental study can be analysed in two ways, one of which is by “computing ‘gain scores’...by subtracting the pre-test scores from the post-tests scores, then comparing these gain scores by using t-tests or ‘analysis of variance’ (ANOVA)” (p. 118). An alternative, non-parametric test is the Kruskal-Wallis test, which Larsen-Hall (2016) defined as “a non-parametric counterpart to the one-way ANOVA. It should be used when you have one independent variable with three or more levels and one dependent variable (p. 477).

SPSS software was the primary tool used for analysing the result of the tests in this study. It was used to conduct a Kruskal-Wallis test to calculate the mean scores of the total number of DMs used, and the gain scores at the four time points, pre-instruction, post-instruction, three weeks post-instruction, and four weeks post-instruction in order to measure whether there was a statistically significant difference between the means and gains of the different treatment groups. Schmitt (2010) stated that, comparing the gains from implementing different teaching approaches by using statistical analysis is:

One of the more challenging, because it requires considerable expertise of research design and statistical analyses. However, it can also be one of the most rewarding, as it can potentially give tangible answers concerning the teaching methodologies which are more effective for the type of students you are involved with. (p. 268)

In this study, the following data analysis was performed:

1. The total frequency count of the DMs and mean scores across the five functions for each group were calculated. This was done at each time point: pre-instruction, immediately post-instruction, and three and four weeks post-instruction. The SPSS software package was used to check the statistical differences and two Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed, the first to investigate if the means of the total DM scores were statistically different for each group at each of the time points.
2. A second Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to investigate the gain scores. The change of the DM frequency counts (the gain scores) was calculated as follows: (Post-test → pre-test, first delayed-test → post-test, second delayed-test → post-test, first delayed-test → pre-test, second delayed-test → pre-test, second delayed test → first delayed test)

This was carried out to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the three groups. In order to determine the significance of the findings, a sig. value was used (a sig. value of less than 0.05 (the typical alpha level) for equality of variances leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis) according to the Equality of Variances (Field, 2009). The aim of conducting the second Kruskal-Wallis test was to answer the second research question.

In addition to the above analysis, tables (20, 21, 22 and 23 in Chapter 5) present the raw scores for the tests that were created to show the initial scores for each DM. This indicated whether the learners used one DM more than others, and the progress of target DM usage from test to test.

#### **4.10 Qualitative data analysis: f4analyse software**

Analysis of the qualitative data was conducted using a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) program, f4analyse software. The reason for choosing this particular software was that its specific features made it suitable for analysing the qualitative data. The f4analyse software allows users to organise their data by putting it into categories. Thus, in this study, after the data had been prepared for analysis through transcription, it was coded into a number of categories, including: usefulness of learning DMs, usefulness of practice, usefulness of group work, teaching methods, lesson organization, using the language, understanding the language, and presentation differences before and after.

There are a number of advantages, disadvantages and risks associated with using CAQDAS. For example, Fielding and Lee (2002) argued that using software in analysing qualitative data may create a gap between researchers and their data. Similarly, according to Yin (2011) another “risk in using software is the added attention needed to follow the software’s procedures and terminology. Such attention may detract from the desired analytic thinking, energy, and decisions that are needed to carry out a strong analysis” (p. 176).

However, a key benefit of using f4analyse is that it is time saving; as Johnston (2006) observed, “Some aspects of QDA [qualitative data analysis] software programs, such as the ability to generate coding automatically or search text for key words, phrases or patterns of words, can save a considerable amount of time” (p. 385), although Weitzman and Miles (1995) argued that “computers do not analyse data; people do” (p. 3). Nevertheless, f4analyse is a useful, time-saving tool, and was implemented in this study

to help organise the data and categorize it based on codes. Kelle (2002) summarised the advantages as follows:

CAQDAS also helps with the systematic use of the complete evidence available in the data much better than any mechanical system of data organization. If the data are methodically coded with the help of software, researchers will find evidence and counter-evidence more easily. This clearly reduces the temptation to build far-reaching theoretical assumptions on some quickly and arbitrarily collected quotations from the material (p. 48).

In addition, f4analyse can retrieve the data at any time, and – in the context of this investigation – export all the coded parts of the interviews with a reference to who said what and to the line numbers of the quoted answers. It is worth noting that computer software packages “are not a substitute for thought, but they are a strong aid to thought” (Weitzman & Miles, 1995, p. 3). Consequently, the f4analyse was used in this study to facilitate the process of the qualitative data analysis.

This section described the overall characteristics of qualitative data analysis, presented the reasons for choosing f4analyse software, and the weaknesses, strengths and benefits of using CAQDAS software in general. The method for qualitative analysis and the process of analysing data used in this study are discussed in the following sub-sections.

#### **4.11 Method for qualitative analysis: thematic analysis**

Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting (themes) within data” (p. 6). They also referred to it as a “foundational method for qualitative analysis” (2006, p. 4). The main purpose of using thematic analysis is to search for themes and patterns in the data. Thematic analysis

provides an accessible form of analysis, especially for novice qualitative researchers, because it does not require knowledge of technological and theoretical approaches such as discourse analysis and grounded theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, thematic analysis does not require a detailed transcription as in conversation and discourse analysis, although the transcriptions should be rigorous and thorough, and include the required information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, thematic analysis is a useful, systematic, flexible, and accessible tool for analysing data, which can lead to rich and detailed results. Thematic analysis is flexible because it can be used within different theoretical frameworks, as it is not tied to a particular or pre-existing framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, it can be considered a realist method, which reports the participants' experiences and meanings, or it can be considered a constructionist method, which investigates the ways in which meaning, experiences, events, and realities are the effects of several discourses operating within a society.

#### **4.11.1 Approaches to thematic analysis**

Themes can be determined in two ways: deductive – the ‘top down’ way, or inductive – the ‘bottom up’ way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this particular study, the researcher used both methods (deductive and inductive) in the analysis. First, because there were a number of pre-existing codes which informed the basis for the interview questions, the deductive approach was used to try and identify any codes in the interviewees' responses. Secondly, the inductive approach (which is not an attempt to fit data into a pre-existing code but is a process of coding in itself) was used to try and identify the codes emerging from the interview data, known as ‘data-driven codes’. As Hennink et al. (2011) stated, “searching for inductive codes allows the data to speak for itself” (p. 218). Inductive codes include significant issues for participants.

Thus, deductive codes developed from the interview questions, while the inductive codes developed from the data. Using both ensured that the analysis included all the issues raised by interviewees. This also meant that some issues emerged that had not been anticipated by the researcher. Furthermore, it was essential to ensure that there was no shift in the meaning of codes during coding.

Memos were also used in the study as well as codes. Clarke (2005) explained that “memos are sites of conversation with ourselves about our data” (p. 202). Memos were used in this study for analytical purposes, as the researcher used them to make notes about the participants, any interesting issues mentioned by them, or to analyse what they were saying.

#### **4.11.2 Phases of thematic analysis**

Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that “analysis is not a linear process instead it is a recursive process” (p. 16). Thus, during analysis, there is a need to move forward and backward between the entire data set. There are six phases of thematic analysis, which were used as a guide in this study. They are presented in Table 18, below.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Description of the process</b>
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re- reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking how the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

**Table 18:** Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 35).

The following sub-section describes the process of coding carried out before arrival at the final themes.

#### **4.12 The process of coding**

The process of coding is composed of developing codes, labelling sections with codes, and putting similar codes into category-enabled themes to help create a thematic map and put similar codes into categories. This sub-section gives a detailed description of the stages of thematic analysis and the process of coding carried out in this study. It also explains how the f4analyse software helped in this process.

For this essential stage of data coding, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) ‘Stages of Thematic Analysis’ were followed. These stages were accomplished in a number of ways. First, immerse myself in the data. This included: a) listening to the data in Arabic, b) transcribing the audio-recorded interviews in Arabic, c) translating them from Arabic into

English and preparing the English transcriptions, d) listening again to the recordings to check the accuracy of the translations and transcriptions, and e) reading and rereading the transcripts while writing down initial ideas. As Braun and Clarke (2006) observed, transcription of verbal data is considered a great way of becoming familiar with it.

The next stage involved importing all the interview transcripts into the f4analyse software. Before the files could be imported, they had to be converted into Rich Text Format (RTF). A list of pre-existing codes was added to the software and a link was made to it in segments of the interviews containing relevant ideas. To connect the extracts to the code, they were highlighted and then linked to the code by one mouse click. Reading the interview texts revealed many segments that related to the same subjects or represented the same ideas. Then, after all the data had been coded to the pre-existing codes, it was necessary to read the texts again and remain open to adding any new codes that emerged from the data. Furthermore, there was a continuous search for newly-emerging themes. The researcher also attempted to identify any further aspects of the data that were not coded and relevant to the study or could provide implications for future research. The texts were coded line-by-line, and any codes that emerged were put into a list. In addition, some of the extracts were coded more than once, as they were relevant to and fit within two or three different codes. For example:

<b>Data extract</b>	<b>Coded for</b>
We knew these words before, but the only thing that we benefited a lot from was to know where to use them and in which position.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DMs' usefulness</li> <li>2. DMs' function</li> <li>3. Using DMs</li> </ol>

**Table 19:** Example of an extract coded to different codes

The criteria for linking codes with segments from interviews were based on two factors: the segment included a word which was connected to the code name, and/or the researcher believed that the meaning of this segment was relevant to a specific code.



This was carried out systematically by reading the texts line-by-line and making edits to the coded data. The f4analyse software helped significantly throughout the process of coding, as summarised below:

1. It allowed the import of all interview extracts, the creation of a list of codes, the creation of codes while going through the text, and the ability to highlight each code using different colours and highlight the coded data.
2. It enabled the assignment of codes to segments of the text and at the same time the assignment of different codes to the same segments. This is labelled in the literature as multiple or double coding (Saldana, 2016).
3. It enabled a search for key words, which was extremely useful for finding similar coded data for further examination and comparison.
4. It filtered all the codes and was able to display everything that was relevant to each code. This assisted with assessment of all the extracts and their specific codes
5. It also enabled the extracts for each code to be viewed together.
6. It assisted greatly by exporting the codes and memos to a PDF document.
7. It helped in the interpretation stage by providing all codes and extracts from all interviewees, along with references to who said what and line numbers. All of which was essential data.

After all the data had been coded and exported from the software, it was used to link the pre-existing codes to pre-existing themes to check for a fit. In other words, the codes were sorted and matched to pre-existing themes in order to see which codes fit under which themes. Any emergent codes were sorted into 'potential' themes that might form a main theme or a sub-theme. In addition, a new theme was created called 'miscellaneous theme', which was used for any codes that did not truly fit into the main themes/sub-themes

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage, emphasis was placed more on themes than on codes, according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendation to sort codes into themes and collate coded extracts within themes. This was achieved by writing the meaning of each code and creating a thematic map to group relevant codes together and put them into categories.

A further review of the themes was conducted to check that the codes still fitted the specific themes identified. As a result of this review, some changes were made to the themes and sub-themes. For example, it became apparent that the usefulness and importance of learning DMs could be integrated into one theme: the usefulness of learning DMs. Flexibility was retained for further changes, as this was not the final review. Then, as a result of the coding process explained above, the final main themes, sub-themes, emergent themes and emergent sub-themes were identified. A list of all these can be found in Chapter Six in Table 35.

#### **4.13 Ethical considerations**

Several ethical issues required consideration in this study because it involved listening to audio-recorded presentations and interviews, some of which included the names of teachers and students. The researcher followed the University of Central Lancashire guidelines when conducting the research. Firstly, an ethics application was submitted to the ethics committee of the University of Central Lancashire (BAHSS) to seek permission to conduct the study, which the committee approved. Then, an information sheet and consent form were prepared and translated into Arabic and given to the students who were assured that their main teacher would not listen to the recordings, which was their main concern, and that all the results would be anonymous.

Neuman (2007) emphasized that a researcher should “never coerce anyone into participating; participation must be voluntary at all times” (p. 51). Thus, students were given a consent form, written in Arabic, and were asked to read it and sign if they agreed to take part in the study. They were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time. As a result, some students withdrew from attending the classes in question.

In addition, all participants were provided with an information sheet, written in Arabic, which included details about the study (project title, researcher name, address, contact details, and the purpose of the study) (See Appendix 9 information sheet - English and Arabic Versions) (See Appendix 10 consent form- English and Arabic Versions).

Some students were worried about having their voice recorded, but were assured of the study’s anonymity. Others did not consent to their presentations being recorded, so one or two volunteers from each group presented the talk on behalf of the others. In order to ensure participants’ confidentiality and anonymity, each participant was assigned a number (1 to 4) in the transcription of the interviews, alongside the group name.

#### **4.14 Summary**

This chapter discussed the research methodology adopted for this study. It started with an outline of the research paradigms and how they shaped the research methods, before moving on to a brief explanation of the research questions and hypotheses. This was followed by a full description of the study design, including several sub-sections related to: participants and sample size, the target DMs, classroom research, and the teaching methods used. An overview of the qualitative research method was then presented

alongside a description of the techniques used for the quantitative and qualitative data collection, including tests, interviews, and exit slips. The transcription process of the learners' presentations and interviews was also described. Furthermore, the chapter presented a detailed explanation of the use of the software packages, SPSS and f4analyse, for the data analysis. Finally, the ethical considerations of the research were discussed. The next chapter presents the quantitative data findings.

## **Chapter Five: Quantitative Data Findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study was conducted to explore the effects of explicit teaching on learning and acquisition of SDMs on EFL learners' presentation production. In this chapter, the quantitative data is described and analysed in relation to the research questions. The qualitative data was gathered mainly through interviews and exit slips, and is presented and analysed following the quantitative data findings in Chapter 6.

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to keep the study as coherent and as comprehensive as possible from both a theoretical and a practical perspective. The quantitative data are presented first, with the raw scores for all groups in the pre-test, post-test and delayed tests, including the mean and gain scores for each group. Quantitative methods were used to measure the overall use of the target DMs during all stages. The analysis of the quantitative data aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi English as a Foreign Language higher education context help students to learn and use them in their presentation?
2. Which teaching approach, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive), or TBLT has a long-term effect on the acquisition of structural discourse markers?

### **5.2 Raw scores of target structural discourse markers (usage)**

Four summary tables of the overall counts of the taught DMs (raw scores) have been created for all groups in all tests. These raw scores were calculated by counting the total usage of each DM in each group presentation (See Tables 20, 21, 22 and 23, below).

### 5.2.1 Findings

Pre-tests, post-tests, first delayed test and second delayed tests were performed and compared. Most of the DMs used by learners from the TBLT group in presentations at the pre-test stage demonstrated for shifting between topics for example *well* and *now*, and for summarizing topics for example, (*so*). However, the same group used only one DM for sequencing (*first*), one DM for opening topics (*ok*), and one DM for closing topics (*right*). In the deductive PPP group, students only used (*for example*) from the target DMs in the pre-test. The inductive PPP group used DMs for giving examples such as (*like* and *for example*), and used (*ok*) for opening topics. Thus, the summarizing topic DMs (*so*) and the shifting between topics DMs (*well*) and (*now*) were mainly used by the TBLT group (See Table 20). To conclude, 14 DMs were used by the TBLT group, one DM was used by the deductive PPP group, and five DMs were used by the inductive PPP group in the first phase (pre-instruction).

The tables (20 and 21) showed that learners in both the deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups demonstrated a significant improvement from pre-test to immediate post-test following the instruction of the DMs. Whereas the TBLT group showed less improvement from pre-test to post-test than the other groups.

The overall count of the DMs used by the TBLT group improved from 14 in the pre-test, to 19 in the immediate post-test, resulting in an increase of five uses. On the other hand, the overall count of DMs used by the deductive PPP group improved from one in the pre-test, to 38 in the immediate post-test, resulting in an increase of 37 uses. Nevertheless, the use of DMs by the inductive PPP improved from five uses in the pre-test to 35 in the immediate post-test, resulting in an increase of 30 uses (See Tables 20 & 21).

All groups used DMs which were not targeted in this study, such as *after that, to sum up, such as, firstly, first of all*. In brief, the deductive and inductive PPP groups demonstrated a significant increase in the usage of the target DMs from pre-test to post-test, and although the TBLT group showed a slight increase in the usage of the DMs, it was not as significant as the improvement demonstrated by the other groups. Thus, the greatest increase in the use of DMs occurred in the deductive and inductive PPP groups.

The first delayed test (see table 22) was carried out three weeks after the treatment, in which the TBLT group used 16 DMs, the deductive PPP group used 8 DMs, and the inductive PPP group used 21 DMs. The second delayed test was conducted four weeks after the treatment, in which the TBLT group's DM usage increased to 20, the deductive PPP group's DM usage decreased to five, and the inductive PPP group's DM usage decreased to 13.

Thus, the performance of both the deductive and inductive PPP groups in the three weeks and second delayed tests showed a decline when compared to the post-tests. Despite the fact that the performance of the TBLT group decreased slightly from the post-test to the first delayed test, TBLT showed slight improvement in the second delayed test in comparison to the post-tests and the first delayed test.

Generally, the performance of the TBLT and inductive PPP groups were similar in both the three and second delayed tests. However, the performance of the deductive PPP group was lower.

Groups	Sequencing					Opening topics				Closing topics		Giving examples		Topic shifts				Summarizing topics		Counts
	First	Second	Next	Then	Finally	Right	Now	Ok	Let's start	Ok	Right	Like	For example	Well	Now	Let's turn to	Let's move on to	To conclude	So	
TBLT Groups	1	0	0	n 0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	3	14
Deductive PPP Groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Inductive PPP Groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5

**Table 20:** Pre-test usage of the target SDMs: TBLT, deductive PPP, and inductive PPP groups (main study)

Groups	Sequencing					Opening topics				Closing topics		Giving examples		Topic shifts				Summarizing topics		Counts
	First	Second	Next	Then	Finally	Right	Now	Ok	Let's start	Ok	Right	Like	For example	Well	Now	Let's turn to	Let's move on to	To conclude	So	
TBLT Groups	0	0	1	3	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	4	0	0	1	1	0	2	19
Deductive PPP Groups	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	0	3	1	3	2	1	38
Inductive PPP Groups	3	3	3	3	3	1	0	2	1	0	0	9	2	1	0	0	2	1	1	35

**Table 21:** Post-test usage of the target SDMs: TBLT, deductive PPP, and inductive PPP groups (main study)



Groups	Sequencing					Opening topics				Closing topics		Giving examples		Topic shifts				Summarizing topics		Counts
	First	Second	Next	Then	Finally	Right	Now	Ok	Let's start	Ok	Right	Like	For example	Well	Now	Let's turn to	Let's move on to	To conclude	So	
TBLT Groups	2	2	1	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	16
Deductive PPP Groups	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	8
Inductive PPP Groups	1	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	4	1	0	0	1	0	3	21

**Table 22:** First delayed test usage of the target SDMs: TBLT, deductive PPP, and inductive PPP groups (main study)

Groups	Sequencing					Opening topics				Closing topics		Giving examples		Topic shifts				Summarizing topics		Counts
	First	Second	Next	Then	Finally	Right	Now	Ok	Let's start	Ok	Right	Like	For example	Well	Now	Let's turn to	Let's move on to	To conclude	So	
TBLT Groups	1	3	2	1	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	20
Deductive PPP Groups	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Inductive PPP Groups	2	2	0	1	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	13

**Table 23:** Second delayed test usage of the target SDMs: TBLT, deductive PPP, and inductive PPP groups (main study)

### 5.3 Introduction to quantitative data analysis

In the study, the three groups received three different treatments. There were 16 students in the TBLT group, 16 students in the deductive PPP group, and 17 students in the inductive PPP group, making a total of 49 participants. Each group was given a group presentation task, and the group presentations were held at four time points: pre-instruction, post-instruction, three weeks' post-instruction, and four weeks' post-instruction. English DMs were observed in the group presentations for the following functions: sequencing, opening/closing topics, giving examples, topic shifts, and summarizing topics. The target DMs for each function were as follows:

- Sequencing: *first, second, next, then, finally*
- Opening/closing topics: *now, ok, right, let's start/ok, right.*
- Giving examples: *for example, like*
- Topic shifts: *now, well, let's turn to, let's move on to*
- Summarizing topics: *so, to conclude*

The following data analyses were performed:

1. TFC of the DMs and the mean scores across the five functions for each group were calculated at each time point – pre-instruction, immediate post-instruction, three week delayed post-instruction, and second delayed post-instruction.
2. The changes in the DM frequency counts (the gain scores) were calculated as follows:
  - Post-test → pre-test = TFC of DMs at immediate post-instruction – TFC of DMs at pre-instruction.
  - First delayed-test → post-test = TFC of DMs at three weeks' post-instruction – TFC of DMs at immediate post-instruction.
  - First delayed-test → pre-test = TFC of DMs at three weeks' post-instruction – TFC of DMs at pre-instruction.

- Second delayed test → first delayed test = TFC of DMs at four weeks' post-instruction – TFC of DMs at three weeks' post-instruction.
- Second delayed-test → Post-test = TFC of DMs at four weeks' post-instruction – TFC of DMs at immediate post-instruction.
- Second delayed-test → pre-test = TFC of DMs at four weeks' post-instruction – TFC of DMs at pre-instruction.

All data analyses were performed using the SPSS software to conduct a Kruskal-Wallis test to calculate the means of the total DM scores and the gain scores at the four aforementioned time points.

#### 5.4 Normality test (mean scores)

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used in this study to test whether the sample of data was normally distributed. The results of the test are shown in table 24.

	Pre-test	Post-test	First-delayed	Second-delayed
Test Statistic	0.217	0.259	0.219	0.242
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

**Table 24:** Analysis result of one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, sig = p-value.

Table 24 shows that the probabilities (Sig) were smaller than 0.05 (the typical alpha level) for all tests, so the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected. The results of the normality test revealed that the data was statistically significantly different from normal distribution (sig = 0.000) which indicated that the data were not normally distributed. In brief, the data in the pre-test, post-test, first delayed test, and second delayed test were not normally distributed. If data violates the assumption of normality required for conducting a one-way ANOVA, then the ANOVA on the original data may provide misleading results, or may not be the most powerful test available. In such cases, using a non-parametric

test (Kruskal-Wallis) may provide a better analysis. Thus, as the normality test conducted in this study indicated that the data were not normally distributed, the researcher decided to use the Kruskal-Wallis test. The Kruskal-Wallis test assumed that the three groups were independent in order to compare the findings.

### 5.5 Analysis results (mean scores)

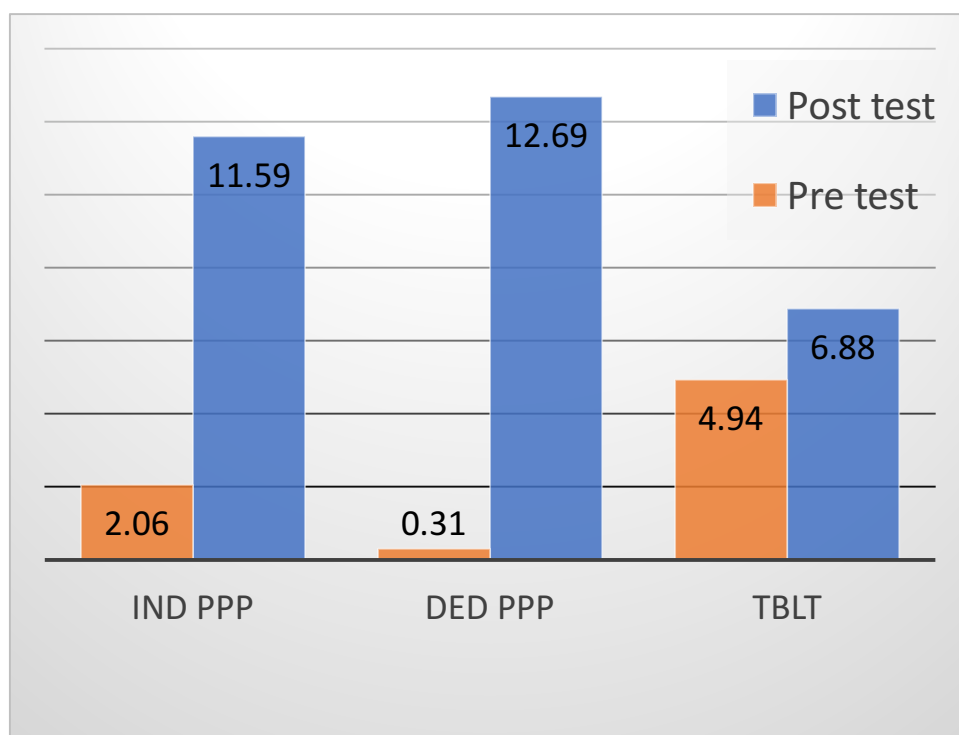
In order to compare the means and determine the gain scores, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed twice to investigate if the means of the total DM scores between each group were statistically different at each of the time points in order to determine the effect of treatment on learning the target DMs. Secondly, it was performed to investigate if the gain scores were statistically different for the three groups, in order to identify the effect of each treatment upon the acquisition of the target DMs. The sig. value was used to determine the significance of the findings, whereby a value of less than 0.05 (the typical alpha level) for equality of variances leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (equality of variances). It was also performed in order to answer the first and second research questions detailed above. Table 25, below, presents the analysis results, which include the mean scores and the standard deviation for each time point (pre-test, post-test, first delayed test and second delayed test).

Groups		Pre-test	Post-test	First-delayed	Second-delayed
TBLT (N=16)	Mean	4.9375	6.8750	5.2500	6.6875
	Std. Deviation	3.27554	1.50000	1.00000	2.05649
Ded. PPP (N=16)	Mean	.3125	12.6875	2.5625	1.6875
	Std. Deviation	.47871	.47871	1.75000	.47871
Ind. PPP (N=17)	Mean	2.0588	11.5882	7.1176	4.4118
	Std. Deviation	2.53650	.93934	.85749	1.66053

**Table 25:** Analysis results of the first means of the total scores of the DMs. N = number of students.

Table 25 reveals an increase in the mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test in all groups' performance. However, the deductive and inductive groups performed better in

the post-test than the TBLT group, and the overall mean for the deductive PPP group improved from .3125 to 12.6875, and the overall mean for the inductive PPP group improved from 2.0588 to 11.5882. Whereas, the overall mean for the TBLT group improved only slightly, from 4.9375 to 6.8750. These results are shown in Figure 2, below.

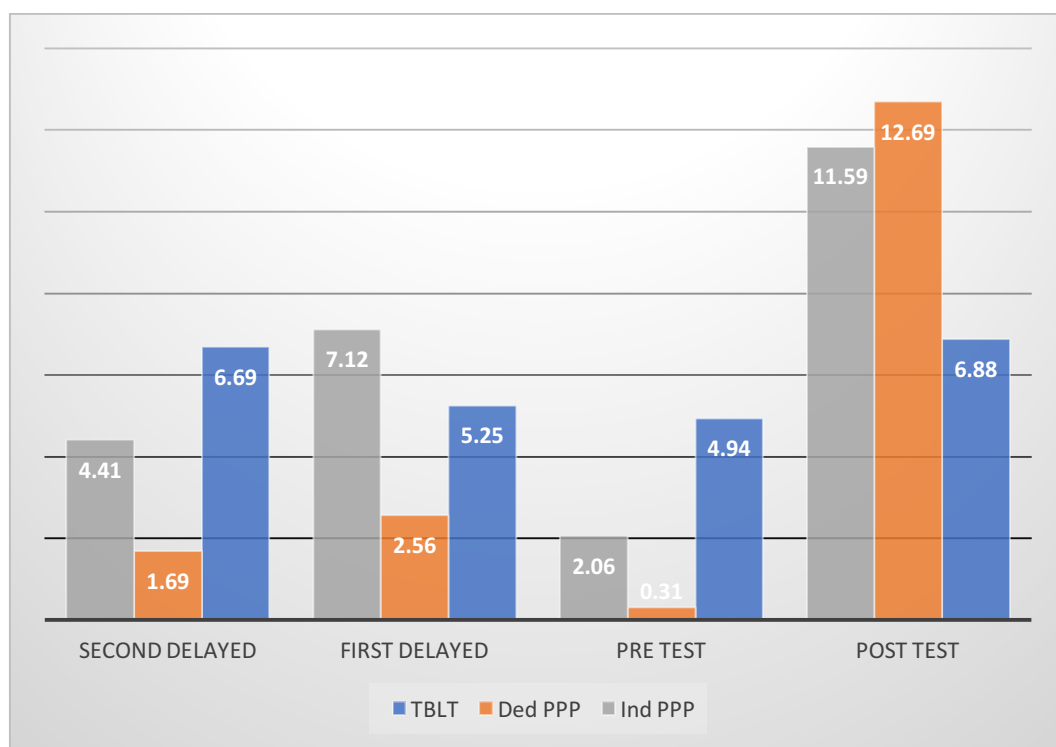


**Figure 2:** Mean scores from pre-test to post-test.

In the first delayed test, the mean scores of the TBLT group decreased slightly in comparison to the post-test, and the overall mean decreased from 6.8750 to 5.2500. However, the mean scores of the deductive and inductive PPP groups were significantly lower in the first delayed test than the post-test, and the overall mean for deductive PPP group decreased from 12.6875 to 2.5625, and the mean for the inductive PPP group decreased from 11.5882 to 7.1176.

In the second delayed test, the TBLT group used 20 DMs and the overall mean increased to 6.6875. However, the mean scores for the deductive PPP group decreased from 2.5625

in the first delayed test to 1.6875 in the second delayed test. the mean scores for inductive PPP decreased from 7.1176 to 4.4118 in the second delayed test. These results are shown in Figure 3, below:



**Figure 3:** Mean scores for all groups in all tests

To conclude, the mean scores of the deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups in the immediate post-test were better than those of the TBLT group. However, the mean scores of all groups decreased in the first delayed test in comparison to post-tests, although the scores of both the TBLT and inductive PPP groups in the first delayed test were better than those of the deductive PPP group. Finally, in the second delayed test, the mean scores of the TBLT group increased slightly from the first delayed test, although the mean scores of both the deductive and inductive PPP groups decreased.

### 5.6 Analysis results of the first Kruskal-Wallis test (mean scores)

Table 26, shows the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test, and whether there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the groups in all tests. A

significance value of below 0.05 indicates a significance difference, and a value of more than 0.05 indicates no significance difference.

Tests	Groups	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sig
<b>Pre-test</b>	TBLT	37.13	21.465	0.000
	Ded. PPP	15.06		
	Ind. PPP	22.94		
<b>Post-test</b>	TBLT	8.50	38.130	0.000
	Ded. PPP	38.22		
	Ind. PPP	28.09		
<b>First-delayed</b>	TBLT	24.19	35.752	0.000
	Ded. PPP	10.38		
	Ind. PPP	39.53		
<b>Second-delayed</b>	TBLT	37.75	31.535	0.000
	Ded. PPP	10.22		
	Ind. PPP	26.91		

**Table 26:** Results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test (mean rank), sig = p-value.

From Table 26 and the results from the Kruskal-Wallis test, it is possible to conclude that there was a statistically significant difference between the means of the total scores of DMs for all groups in the:

- pre-instruction phase at the 0.05 level (sig = 0.00).
- post-instruction phase at the 0.05 level (sig = 0.00).
- first delayed post-instruction phase at the 0.05 level (sig = 0.00).
- second delayed post-instruction phase at the 0.05 level (sig = 0.00).

These results are shown clearly in the next table of hypothesis test summary.

	<b>Null Hypothesis</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1	The distribution of the pre-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis
2	The distribution of the post-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis
3	The distribution of the first delayed-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis
4	The distribution of the second delayed-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis

**Table 27:** Hypothesis test summary (mean scores)

To conclude, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores in all tests. In addition, the significance results did not reveal which group was different, but this is shown in the pairwise comparisons of the groups in the following section.

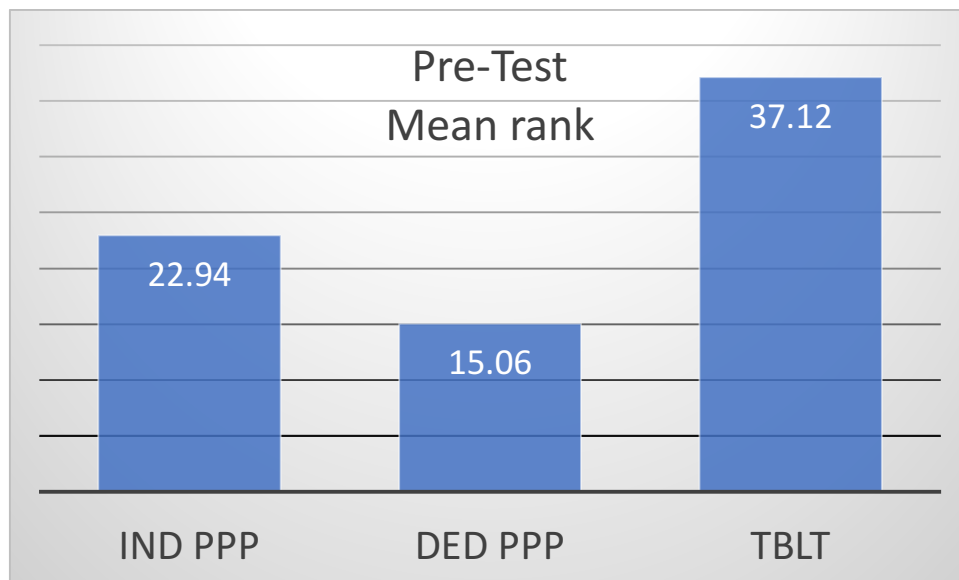
### 5.6.1 Pairwise comparison of groups

The pairwise comparison showed which group was different in each test. Table 28 and figure 4 showed the comparison results of groups in the pre-test.

<b>Sample1-Sample2</b>	<b>Test Statistic</b>	<b>Adj. Sig.</b>
Ded. PPP – Ind. PPP	-7.879	0.293
Ded. PPP – TBLT	22.062	0.000
Ind. PPP – TBLT	14.184	0.009

**Table 28:** Pairwise comparisons test for pre-test (mean rank), Sig= p-value.



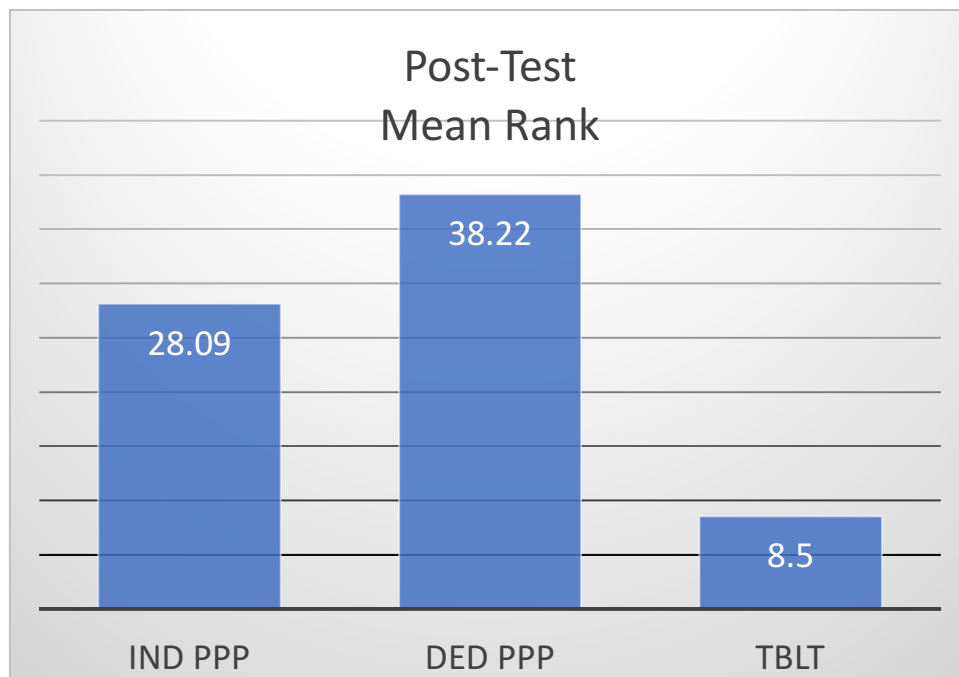


**Figure 4:** Pairwise comparison of groups' mean rank (pre-test)

Table 28 and Figure 4, above, indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores of the TBLT and deductive PPP groups with a p-value = 0.000, and between TBLT and inductive PPP with a p-value = 0.009, in favor of the TBLT group which had the highest mean rank (37.13). The next table and figure showed the pairwise comparisons of post-tests.

Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Adj. Sig.
TBLT – Ind. PPP	-19.588	0.000
TBLT -Ded. PPP	-29.719	0.000
Ind. PPP - Ded. PPP	10.131	0.107

**Table 29:** Pairwise comparisons test for post-test (mean rank), Sig= p-value.

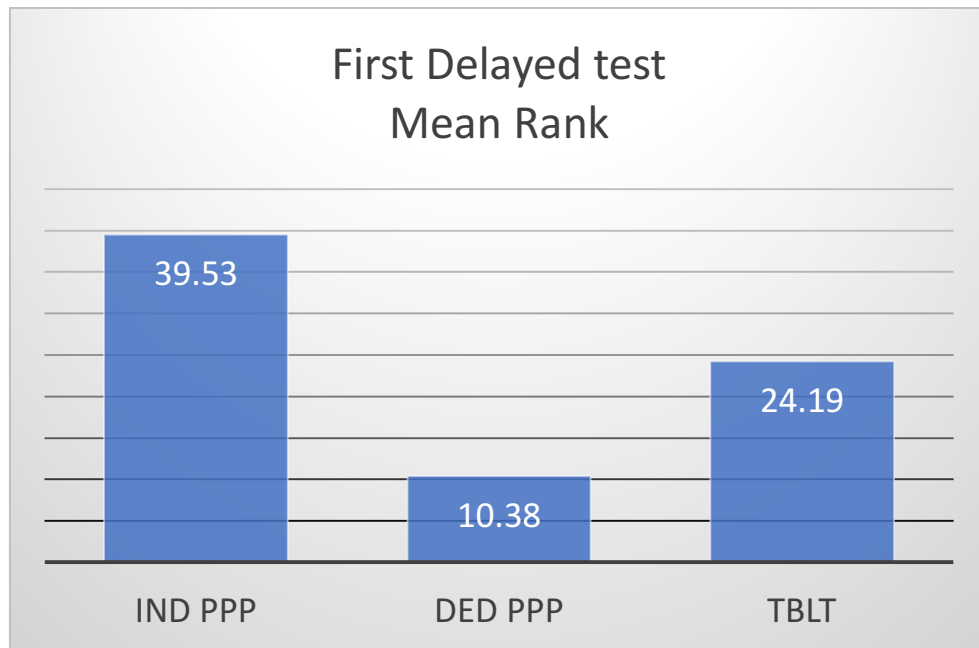


**Figure 5:** Pairwise comparison of groups' mean rank (post-test)

Table 29 and Figure 5, show that there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the TBLT and inductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.000 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had a mean score of 28.09, and between the TBLT and deductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.000 in favour of the deductive PPP group which had the highest mean rank (38.22). The next table and figure showed the pairwise comparisons of first delayed-test.

Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Adj. Sig.
Ded. PPP – TBLT	13.812	0.016
Ded. PPP - Ind. PPP	-29.154	0.000
TBLT - Ind. PPP	-15.342	0.005

**Table 30:** Pairwise comparisons test for first delayed test (mean rank), Sig= p-value.

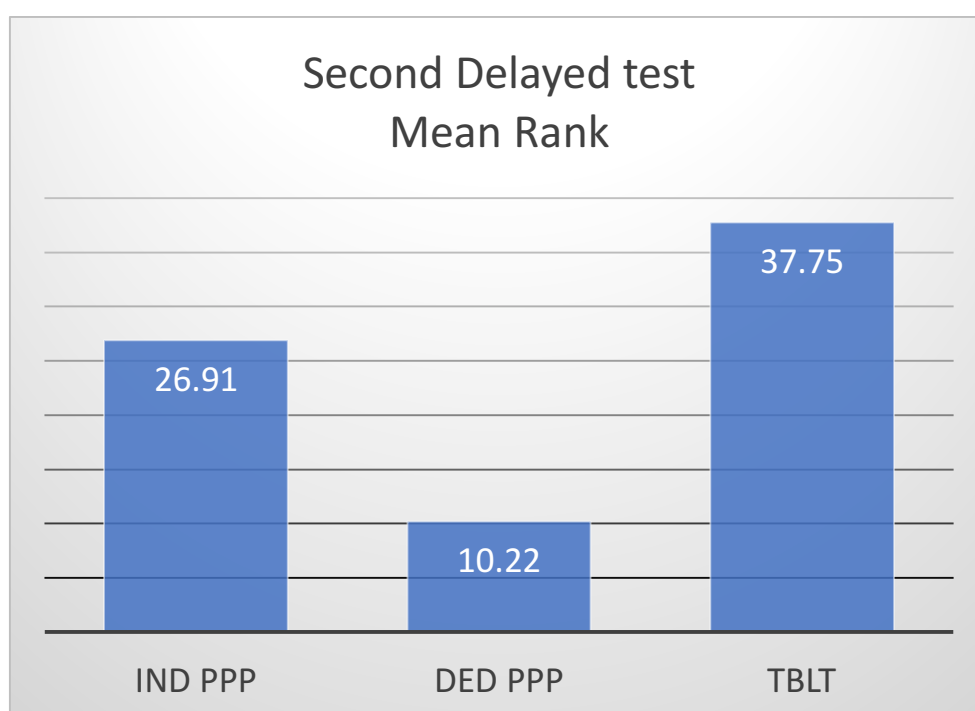


**Figure 6:** Pairwise comparison of groups' mean rank (first delayed-test)

Table 30 and Figure 6, reveal a statistically significant difference between the first delayed test scores of the deductive PPP and the TBLT groups, with a p-value = 0.016 in favour of the TBLT group which had a mean score of 24.19. There was also a statistically significant difference between the first delayed test scores of the deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.000 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had the highest mean rank 39.53, and between the first delayed test scores of the TBLT and the inductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.005 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had a mean rank of 39.53. The next table and figure show the pairwise comparisons of second delayed-test.

Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Adj. Sig.
Ded. PPP – Ind. PPP	-16.693	0.002
Ded. PPP – TBLT	27.531	0.000
Ind. PPP – TBLT	10.838	0.078

**Table 31:** Pairwise comparisons test for second delayed test (mean rank), Sig= p-value.



**Figure 7:** Pairwise comparison of groups' mean rank (second delayed-test)

Table 31 and Figure 7, show that there was a statistically significant difference between the second delayed test scores of the deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.002 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had the highest mean rank (26.91). There was also a statistically significant difference between the second delayed test scores of the deductive PPP and TBLT groups, with a p-value = 0.000 in favour of the TBLT group, which had the highest mean rank (37.75).

To sum up, the performance of all groups improved from the pre-test to the delayed tests. Thus, the first null hypothesis, which stated that teaching DMs would not make a difference in learners' presentation production and to all experimental groups, was rejected.

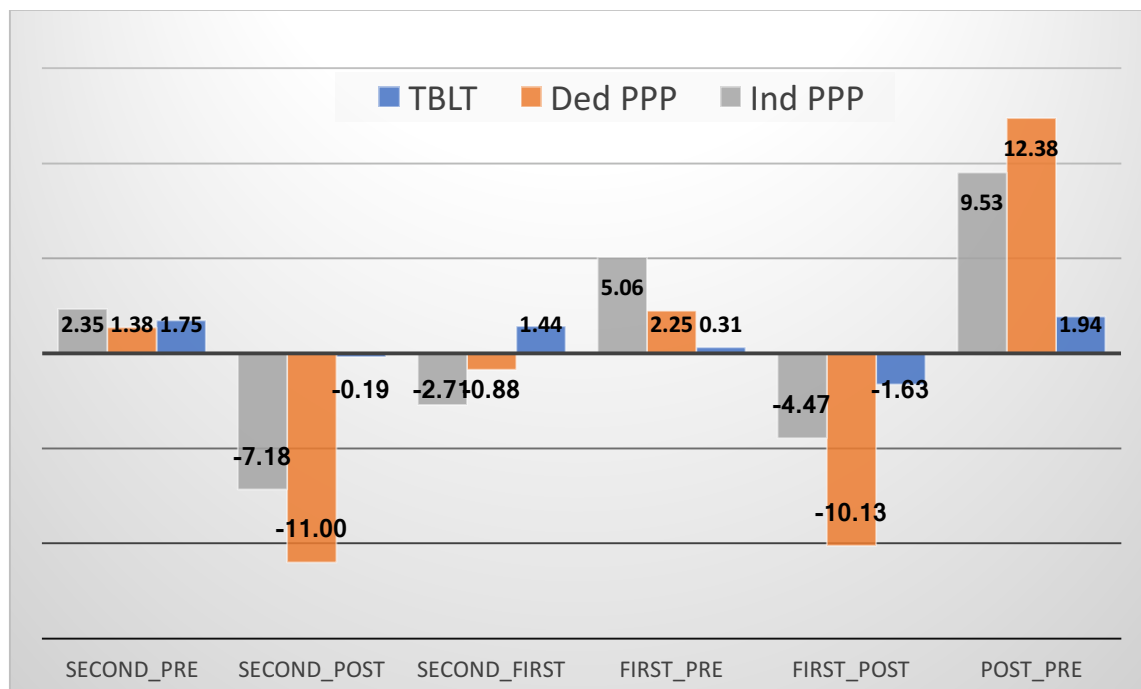
### 5.7 Analysis results (gain scores)

The second means (gain scores) tests were then performed, the results of which are shown in Table 32.

Groups		post_pre	first_post	first_pre	second_first	second_post	second_pre
TBLT (N=16)	Mean	1.9375	-1.6250-	.3125	1.4375	-.1875-	1.7500
	Std. Deviation	4.76751	.50000	4.26956	2.39357	2.68871	3.87298
Ded. PPP (N=16)	Mean	12.3750	-10.1250-	2.2500	-.8750-	-11.0000-	1.3750
	Std. Deviation	.50000	2.21736	1.91485	2.21736	.00000	.50000
Ind. PPP (N=17)	Mean	9.5294	-4.4706-	5.0588	-2.7059-	-7.1765-	2.3529
	Std. Deviation	2.71840	1.73629	2.98895	1.99263	1.28624	3.83962

**Table 32:** Results of the second means (gain scores) of the total scores of the DMs. N = number of students.

Table 32 presents all groups' gain scores for all tests. It shows the second means (gain scores) and the standard deviation. It shows an increase in the gain scores from pre-test to first delayed-test and from pre-test to second-delayed test in all groups' scores. These results are also shown in Figure 8, below.



**Figure 8:** Gain scores for all groups in all tests

### 5.8 Normality test (gain scores)

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine whether the data was normally distributed, the results of which are shown in the next table.

N=49	Post-test– pre-Test	First delayed – post-test	First delayed –pre-test	Second delayed – first delayed	Second delayed –post –test	Second delayed –pre-test
Test Statistic	.243	.211	.211	.159	.172	.177
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.003 <sup>c</sup>	.001 <sup>c</sup>	.001 <sup>c</sup>

**Table 33:** Results of the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, sig = p-value.

Table 32 indicates that the probabilities (Sig) were smaller than 0.05 (the typical alpha level) for all tests (post-test to pre-test, first delayed to post-test, first delayed to pre-test, second delayed to first delayed, second delayed to post-test, and second delayed to pre test) so the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, and it was decided that the data were not normally distributed.

So, the data violated the assumption of normality required for a one-way ANOVA test. As a result, a non-parametric test (Kruskal-Wallis) test was implemented to provide a better analysis.

### 5.9 Results of the second Kruskal-Wallis test (gain scores)

The second Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to investigate if the gain scores of all the groups were statistically different, in order to determine the effect of each treatment on the acquisition of the target DMs. Table 34, presents the results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test, and whether there was a statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the groups in all the aforementioned tests. A significance value of below 0.05 indicates a significance difference, and a value of more than 0.05 indicates no significance difference.

	Groups	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sig
post_pre	TBLT	9.28	36.098	0.000
	Ded. PPP	39.06		
	Ind. PPP	26.56		
first_post	TBLT	41.50	41.801	0.000
	Ded. PPP	9.28		
	Ind. PPP	24.26		
first_pre	TBLT	19.75	11.063	0.004
	Ded. PPP	20.50		
	Ind. PPP	34.18		
second_first	TBLT	36.50	19.704	0.000
	Ded. PPP	24.41		
	Ind. PPP	14.74		
second_post	TBLT	41.50	44.608	0.000
	Ded. PPP	8.50		
	Ind. PPP	25.00		
second_pre	TBLT	24.13	0.292	0.864
	Ded. PPP	24.31		
	Ind. PPP	26.47		

**Table 34:** Results of the second Kruskal-Wallis test (gain scores), sig = p-value.

From table 34, and the results of the second Kruskal-Wallis test, it is possible to conclude that there was a statistically significant difference between the means of the gain scores of DMs for all groups from the:

- pre-test to the post-test at the 0.05 level (sig = .000).
- post-test to the first delayed test at the 0.05 level (sig = .000).
- first delayed test at the 0.05 level (sig = .004).
- first delayed test to the second delayed test at the 0.05 level (sig = .000).
- post-test to the second delayed test at the 0.05 level (sig = .000).

There was no statistically significant difference between the means of the gain scores of DMs for all groups from the pre-test to the second delayed test at the 0.05 level (sig = .864).

These results are presented in Table 35 of the hypothesis test summary.

	<b>Null Hypothesis</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1	The distribution of post-test to pre-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis
2	The distribution of first delayed to post-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis
3	The distribution of the first delayed-test to pre-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.004	Reject the null hypothesis
4	The distribution of the second delayed-test to the first-delayed test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis
5	The distribution of the second delayed-test to the post-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis
6	The distribution of the second delayed-test to the pre-test is the same across categories of groups	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test	0.864	Retain the null hypothesis

**Table 35:** Hypothesis test summary (gain scores)

To conclude, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean of the gain scores in the following tests: post–pre, first–post, first–pre, second–first, second–post, and second–pre. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the second delayed test and the pre-test. In addition, the significance results did not show which group is different, but this is shown in the pairwise comparison of the groups in the following section.

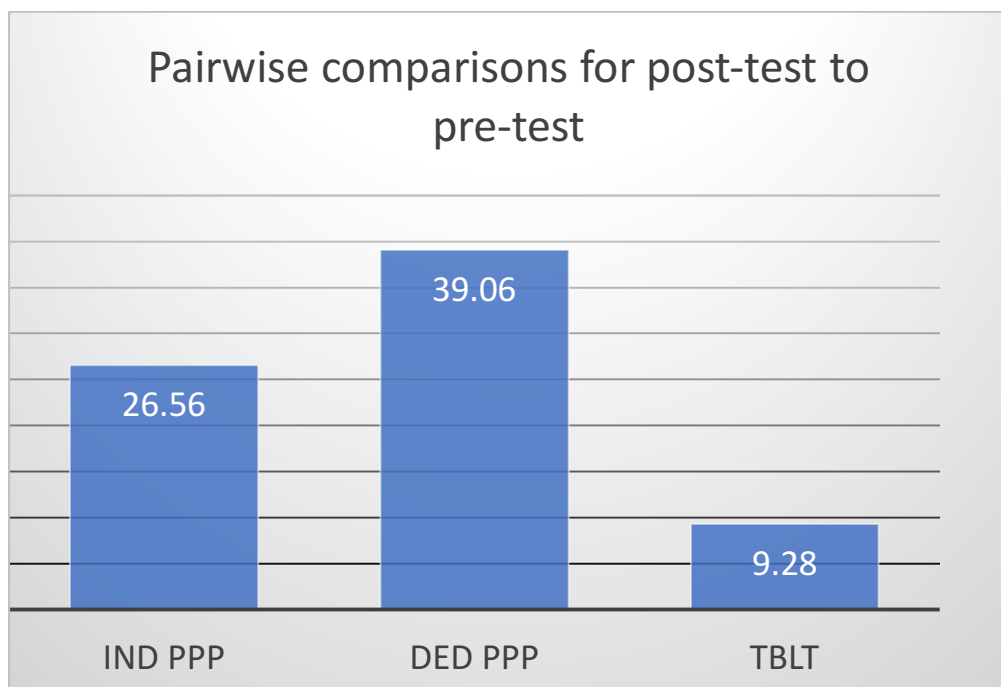
### **5.9.1 Pairwise comparison of groups (gain scores)**

The results of the pairwise comparison conducted to ascertain whether the gain scores of the DMs were significantly different in the TBLT, deductive PPP, and inductive PPP groups. The changes in the DM frequency counts (the gain scores) were calculated as follows:



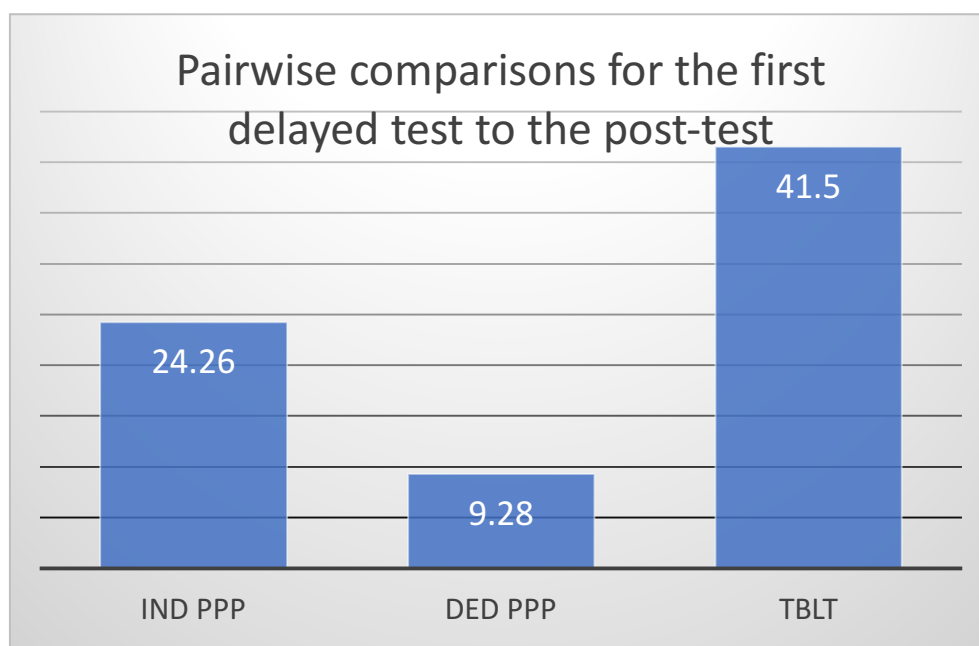
- Post-test  $\rightarrow$  pre-test = TFC of DMs at immediate post-instruction — TFC of DMs at pre-instruction.
- First delayed-test  $\rightarrow$  post-test = TFC of DMs at three weeks' post-instruction — TFC of DMs at immediate post-instruction.
- Second delayed-test  $\rightarrow$  post-test = TFC of DMs at four weeks' post-instruction — TFC of DMs at immediate post-instruction.
- First delayed-test  $\rightarrow$  pre-test = TFC of DMs at three weeks' post-instruction — TFC of DMs at pre-instruction.
- Second delayed-test  $\rightarrow$  pre-test = TFC of DMs at four weeks' post-instruction — TFC of DMs at pre-instruction.
- Second delayed test  $\rightarrow$  first delayed test = TFC of DMs at four weeks' post-instruction — TFC of DMs at three weeks' post-instruction.

The pairwise comparison shows which group was different in each test. Figure 9 shows the comparison results of groups' gain scores from pre-test to post-test.



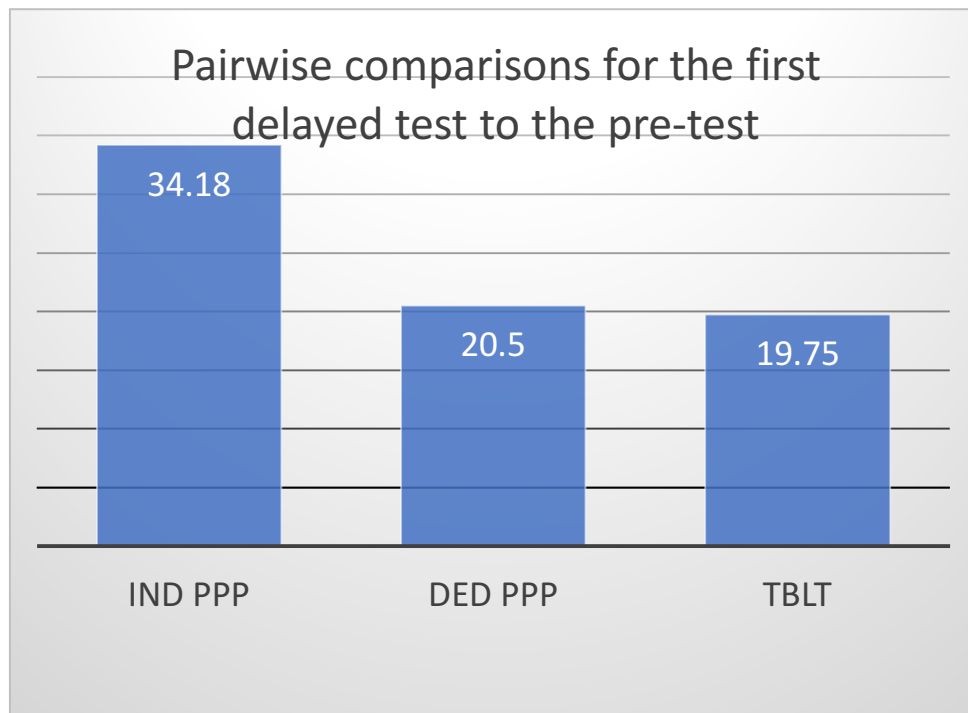
**Figure 9:** Pairwise comparisons for post-test to pre-test (gain scores).

Pairwise comparisons for post-test to pre-test (gain scores) indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the TBLT and deductive PPP groups from post-test to pre-test, with a p-value = 0.000 in favour of the deductive PPP group, which had the highest mean rank (39.06), and for the TBLT and inductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.001 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had a mean rank of 26.56. There was also a statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the inductive PPP and deductive PPP groups from post-test to pre-test, with a p-value = 0.032 in favour of the deductive PPP group, which had the highest mean rank (39.06).



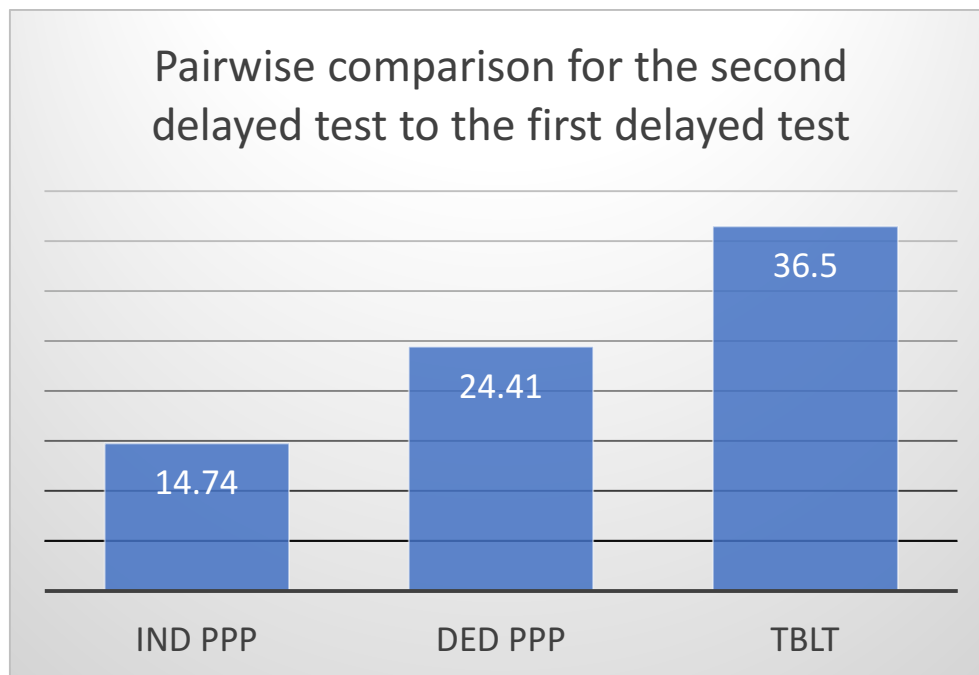
**Figure 10:** Pairwise comparisons for the first delayed test to the post-test (gain scores). Pairwise comparisons for the first delayed test to the post-test indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the TBLT and deductive PPP groups from the first delayed test to the post-test, with a p-value = 0.000 in favour of the TBLT group, which had the highest mean rank (41.50), and between the gain scores of the TBLT and inductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.001 in favour of the TBLT group. There was also a statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the

inductive PPP and deductive PPP groups from the post to the pre-test, with a p-value = 0.007 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had the highest mean rank 24.26.



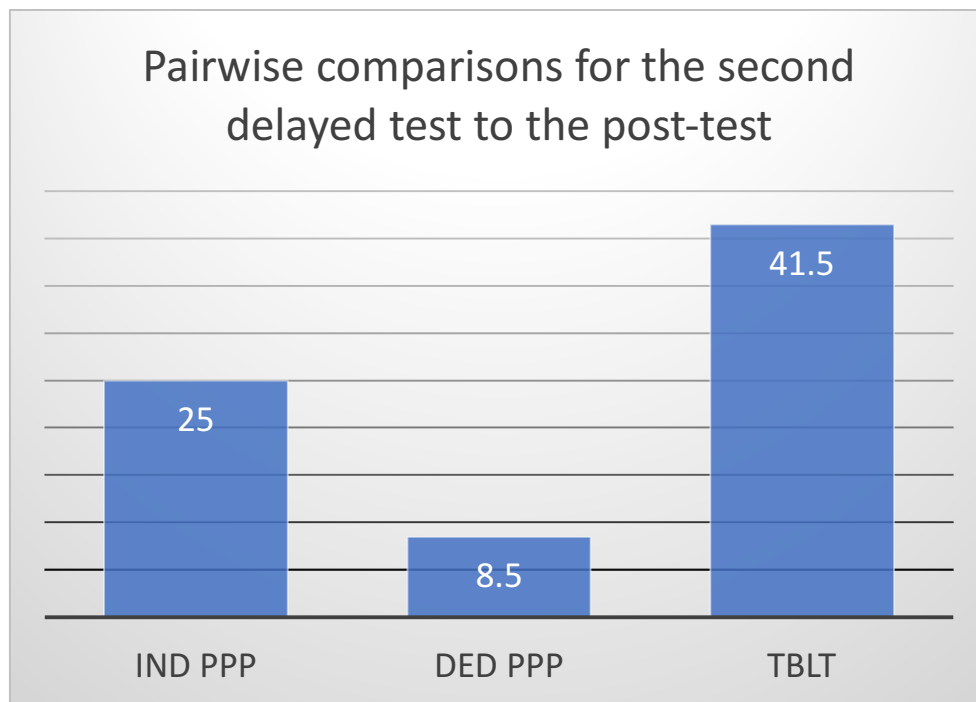
**Figure 11:** Pairwise comparisons for the first delayed test to the pre-test (gain scores).

Pairwise comparisons for the first delayed test to the pre-test indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the TBLT and inductive PPP groups from the first delayed test to the pre-test, with a p-value = 0.010 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had the highest mean rank (34.18), and between the inductive PPP and deductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.016 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had the highest mean rank (34.18).



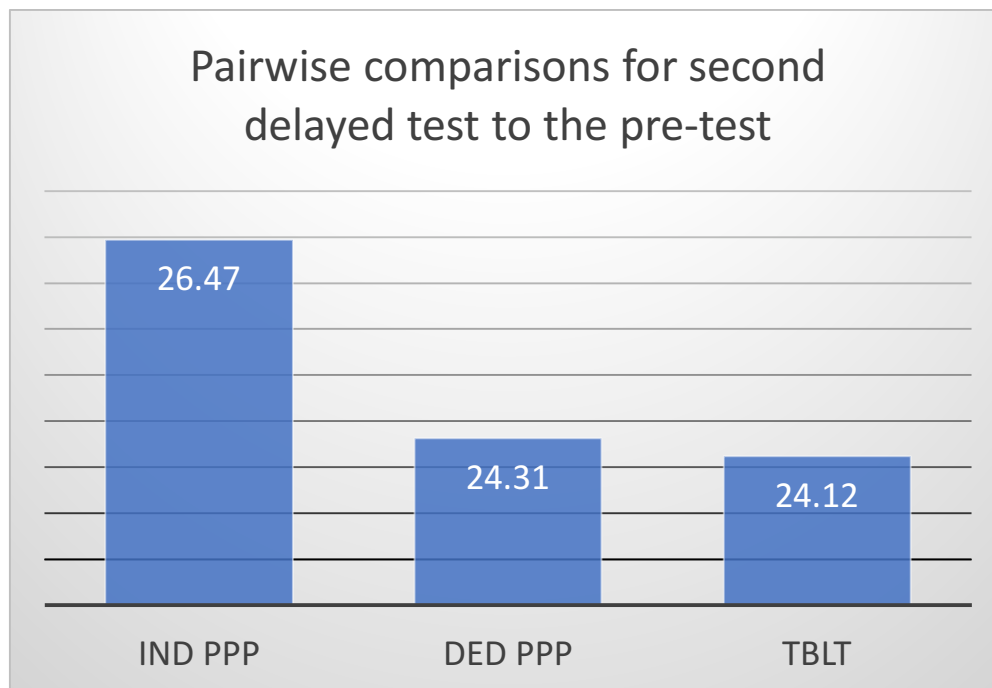
**Figure 12:** Pairwise comparison for the second delayed test to the first delayed test (gain scores).

Pairwise comparison for the second delayed test to the first delayed test reveals a statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the TBLT and inductive PPP groups from the second delayed test to the first delayed test, with a p-value = 0.000 in favour of the TBLT group, which had the highest mean rank (36.50), and between the inductive PPP and deductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.046 in favour of the deductive PPP group, which had a mean rank score of 24.41.



**Figure 13:** Pairwise comparisons for the second delayed test to the post-test (gain scores).

Pairwise comparisons for the second delayed test to the post-test demonstrates that there was a statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the TBLT and deductive PPP groups from the second delayed test to the post-test, with a p-value = 0.000 in favour of the TBLT group, which had the highest mean rank (41.50), and between the TBLT and inductive PPP groups, with a p-value = 0.002 in favour of the TBLT group. There was also a statistically significant difference between the inductive PPP and deductive PPP groups from the second delayed test to the post-test, with a p-value = 0.002 in favour of the inductive PPP group, which had a mean rank score of 25.00.



**Figure 14:** Pairwise comparisons for second delayed test to the pre-test (gain scores).

Pairwise comparisons for second delayed test to the pre-test reveals no statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the three groups from the second delayed test to the pre-test, since their mean scores were convergent by values of 24.12, 24.31, and 26.47, respectively. Thus, the second null hypothesis, which stated that teaching methods would have the same impact on learners' acquisition of DMs was rejected.

Based on the results of the second Kruskal-Wallis test, it can be concluded that:

- The gain scores improved for all groups from the pre-test to the post-test. The gain of DMs from the pre-test to the post-test was 1.93 for TBLT, 12.37 for deductive PPP, and 9.52 for inductive PPP.
- The gain scores from the post-test to the first delayed test were not improved. The gain of DMs from the first delayed test to the post-test was 1.62 for TBLT, -10.12 for deductive PPP, and -6.47 for inductive PPP.
- The gain scores from the pre-test to the first delayed test increased for all groups. The gain of DMs from the delayed test to the pre-test was .31 for TBLT, 2.25 for deductive PPP, and 5.05 for inductive PPP.

- The gain scores from the first delayed test to the second delayed test increased for TBLT and decreased for deductive and inductive PPP. The gain of DMs from the second delayed test to the first delayed test pre-test was 1.43 for TBLT, -.87 for deductive PPP, and -2.70 for inductive PPP.
- The gain scores from the post-test to the second delayed test increased for TBLT and decreased for deductive and inductive PPP. The gain of DMs from the second delayed test to the post-test was .18 for TBLT, -11.0 for deductive PPP, and -7.17 for inductive PPP.
- The gain scores from the pre-test to the second delayed test increased for all groups. The gain of DMs from the second delayed test to the pre-test was 1.75 for TBLT, 1.37 for deductive PPP, and 2.35 for inductive PPP.

In brief, it can be concluded that the findings of the quantitative data demonstrated that, all three groups showed improvement in the mean ranks of DMs immediately after explicit instruction which is evidence of the effect of treatment on learning, however, the inductive and deductive PPP groups outperformed the TBLT group. With regard to the effect of treatment upon acquisition, the inductive PPP group outperformed both the TBLT and deductive PPP group in the first delayed test which means that inductive PPP seems to work better with this group of learners when compared with TBLT and deductive PPP.

### **5.10 Summary**

This chapter presented and analysed the findings of the quantitative data. In the next chapter (Chapter 6), the qualitative data is presented and analysed. Chapter 7 discusses both the quantitative and qualitative findings in relation to the research questions and the literature review. The quantitative data provides answers to the first and second research

questions. The qualitative data addresses the third research question, and establishes whether it is possible to answer the first and second research questions qualitatively.



## **Chapter Six: Qualitative Data Findings**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the qualitative study data which was collected using two tools: semi-structured interviews and exit slips. It provides a description and analysis of the qualitative data and highlights the participants' views regarding learning and practising SDMs. Then the codes and themes identified within the data are reviewed, and the main themes and sub-themes categorized. As described in Chapter 4, the coding was conducted using f4analyse CAQDAS software. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a researcher should "choose particularly vivid examples, or extracts which capture the essence of the point you are demonstrating" (p. 23). Hatch (2002) stated that "researchers should provide excerpts from their data to give the reader a real sense of how what was learned played out in the actual settings examined" (p. 225). Thus, relevant extracts from the interview data have been chosen and are presented in this chapter.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, this study described participants who experienced a particular phenomenon. In this case, the participants were EFL upper-intermediate level (B2) learners in Saudi Arabia attending the PYP in an English Language Institution at Taibah University. As previously highlighted, the interviews were conducted in Arabic, with one interviewee giving some answers in English, and some between English and Arabic. The interviews were translated from Arabic into English and transcribed by the researcher, allowing a closer and deeper insight into the data and the opportunity to identify perceptions towards learning, practising DMs, and the teaching methods.

The qualitative data analysis primarily sought to address the third research question identified earlier in the study:

3. To what extent do Saudi EFL learners consider learning structural discourse markers via TBLT, inductive PPP, or deductive PPP more useful than traditional teaching methods?

The analysis also sought to investigate any potential additional answers to the first and second research questions, which are primarily addressed by the quantitative data.

1. To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi English as a Foreign Language higher education context help students to learn and use them in their presentation?

**Sub question:** Do learners consider learning and practising structural discourse markers useful and why?

2. Which teaching approach, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive), or TBLT has a long-term effect on the acquisition of structural discourse markers?

## **6.2 Interview data analysis: discussion of coded interviews**

Each interview was transcribed and translated by the researcher to prepare it for analysis. F4analyse software was used to record codes and memos, as well as to organise data by putting it into categories and allowing data retrieval at any time. The purpose of using f4analyse was to facilitate the process of qualitative data analysis, select quotations from the data, and link more than one code to the same extract. Although f4analyse enables data organization, linking codes with segments from the interviews and analysing the data were tasks for the researcher.

All the interviews were coded according to categories from two sources: pre-existing and data-driven codes (see Section 4.11 for more details). Pre-existing codes included, for example, ‘learning DMs’, ‘practising DMs’, ‘presentation differences’, ‘lesson description’, ‘teaching methods’, ‘understanding DMs’, and ‘using DMs’. However,

some of the codes emerged from the data, so were data-driven. Examples of these data-driven codes include: 'topics' and 'group work'. The main themes were presented in relation to all three groups. Some themes emerged that were relevant to the main themes and were categorized as sub-themes such as 'usefulness of giving presentations'. Other irrelevant themes that emerged are highlighted in Table 36 (theme 4 and theme 5) which might provide insights for future research. Examples of coded data, and memos can be found in Appendix 7. The meaning of each code is presented in Table 36.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Classroom	Comments or answers that describe the atmosphere of the classroom.
Individual presentations	Comments or answers provided in relation to individual presentations.
Individual or pair work	Comments or answers provided in relation to individual or pair work.
DM functions	Comments or answers that describe the function of DMs.
Participation	Comments or answers that describe learner participation in class.
Learning	Comments or answers that describe learning in general.
Cooperation	Comments or answers that relate to students cooperating with each other.
Method differences	Comments or answers that describe the difference between the selected teaching method and normal teaching methods.
Difficulty	Comments or answers that describe difficulties with regard to writing presentations using DMs.
Class arrangement	Comments or answers that describe the arrangements in both normal and research classes.
Talk organization	Comments or answers that relate to the usefulness of DMs in organizing talks or ideas.
Speaking	Comments or answers that describe speaking in the classroom or an academic context.
Writing	Comments or answers that describe writing in an academic context or classroom.
Giving presentations	Comments or answers provided in relation to giving presentations.
Time limit	Comments or answers that describe the time limit for talking or giving presentations.
English improvement	Comments or answers that describe the effectiveness of learning DMs in terms of improving English language.
Vocabulary	Comments or answers that relate to learning new words or developing vocabulary.
Lessons	Comments or answers that describe lessons in general and highlight the usefulness of particular lessons.
Topics	Comments or answers that describe selected topics.
Group work	Comments or answers that describe group work in general and the benefits of group work more specifically.
DMs	Comments or answers that describe DMs generally.
DM usefulness and importance	Comments or answers that relate to the importance and usefulness of DMs.
Learning DMs	Comments or answers that describe learning DMs.
Using DMs	Comments or answers that describe using DMs.
Understanding DMs	Comments or answers that describe the understanding and recognition of DMs and their meanings.
Lesson description	Comments or answers that describe the procedures of lessons to gain insight into whether learners understand the way they are taught, and if they notice whether lesson procedures are the same over the five lessons.
Teaching method	Comments or answers provided in relation to teaching and teaching methods in general.
Practising DMs	Comments or answers that describe practising DMs in class.
Presentation differences	Comments or answers that describe presentation differences before and after learning DMs.

**Table 36:** The meaning of each code

In any study, keeping a list of all codes and their meanings is essential for maintaining consistency. In this investigation, after the codes were identified (pre-existing or data-driven), similar ones were grouped into categories in order to establish the final themes. For instance, codes concerning DMs (learning DMs/understanding DMs/DM functions/DM importance) were categorized under the theme, 'the usefulness or importance of DMs'.

There were two stages in the coding process: pre-existing themes and data-driven themes. Before the data analysis could be carried out, there were a number of primary themes to be explored, referred to as 'pre-existing' themes. These were: 'usefulness of learning', 'using DMs', and 'the usefulness of the proposed teaching method in learning DMs', and emerged from the purpose of using them in the practice of giving presentations. Flexibility was also maintained in order to investigate any further themes that emerged from the data during analysis. These were referred to as 'emergent themes'. Three main emergent themes were identified, which characterized participants who experienced instruction of DMs in relation to two parameters: 'the usefulness of learning DMs', the usefulness of practising DMs', and 'the usefulness of the teaching methods for learning DMs in comparison to more traditional teaching methods'. Specific data extracts are included in relation to these two parameters.

It was important to include some of the most relevant comments from each group, which offered different and interesting perspectives, and enabled the researcher to gain more insights into the effectiveness of learning DMs using the different interventions/teaching methods. In addition, the selected comments facilitated an in-depth examination of the learners' perceptions through a comparison of the different responses, and allowed final comments to be made regarding whether the opinions given were consistent. An example

of an interview transcript can be found in Appendix 6. The following section introduces the f4analyse results in terms of codes and themes. It also highlights the main themes and sub-themes and provides a definition and examples for each of them.

### 6.2.1 F4analyse results (codes and themes)

Main themes consisted of pre-existing and data-driven themes. Furthermore, data-driven or emergent themes can be considered interesting, as they were not predicted. The selection of the pre-existing themes was based on two factors: the research questions and the ‘usefulness function’. Usefulness was selected as a theme because it is most suitable and compatible reason for teaching DMs in this particular context (EFL) and in the practice of giving presentations.

To address the research questions, the themes have been identified and organised into Table 37, which presents how the codes are grouped under themes and sub-themes, and identifies the type of theme whether pre-existent or emergent.

	Themes	Main codes	Theme
<b>Theme 1</b>	Usefulness of learning DMs.	DMs, learning DMs, DM importance & usefulness, DM functions, understanding DMs.	P
<b>Theme 2</b>	Usefulness of practising DMs	Practising DMs, using DMs, talk organization, English improvement.	P
<b>Sub-themes</b>	2.1 Usefulness of giving presentations 2.2 Presentation differences before and after learning DMs	Giving presentations, individual presentations Presentation differences	E E
<b>Theme 3</b>	Usefulness of teaching methods	Teaching methods, classroom, class management, time limit, participation	P
<b>Sub-themes</b>	3.1 Learner awareness of teaching method 3.2 Teaching method differences 3.3 Usefulness of group work	Lesson description Method differences Group work, cooperation,	E P E
<b>Theme 4</b>	Learners’ opinions of lessons and topics	Lessons, topics	E
<b>Theme 5</b>	Miscellaneous theme	Difficulty and individual/pair work, activities, learning, speaking, writing and vocabulary.	E

**Table 37:** Key themes and sub-themes generated from codes: P = Pre-existing themes. E = Emergent themes.

The findings were organised by first presenting the results related to the usefulness of learning DMs (themes 1), those related to the usefulness of practising DMs (theme 2), and finally those related to the usefulness of the teaching methods (theme 3).

The next section systematically presents the data by stating a theme, explaining what it stands for, and supporting its relevance with evidence and extracts from interviewee responses from all three groups. Following the description of each theme, there are relevant extracts from learners' interviews. A discussion of the findings in relation to the relevant research question and literature review can be found in Chapter 7.

### **6.3 Theme 1: The usefulness and importance of learning discourse markers**

According to Jones (2010), there are many reasons for teaching DMs explicitly. The one that forms the basis for this research is because of their usefulness. So, the first main theme presented here concerns students' opinions on the usefulness and the importance of learning DMs. Specifically, their usefulness, when giving presentations is also considered (see subsection 6.3.4).

This theme is a reflection of a number of aspects and key points reported by the interviewees. It looks, for instance, at their opinions about DMs and whether or not they found them easy, difficult, useful, or important (usefulness and importance). It also considers students' perceptions of the function and understanding of DMs in terms of recognizing their usage, functions, and meanings. Hence, the next section sheds light on to what extent participants found learning DMs useful, and how DMs helped them when giving presentations.

In general, the participants confirmed that learning DMs was useful. All interviewees from both the deductive and inductive PPP groups (four in each group) and three out of

four in the TBLT group said that learning DMs was useful and important, although and one (interviewee 1) did not agree. Accordingly, the positive responses are described under the following categories: learners' beliefs, why they are useful and important, and awareness of DM usage and function.

### **6.3.1 Learners' beliefs**

With regard to the first category, learners' beliefs, one of the participants stated that *"they are not difficult and not easy"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 22). The interviewee explained, *"They are difficult to learn if nobody tells you about them and you do not know how to use them, but they get easier to use with practice"* (line 24). Another interviewee observed, *"We found it difficult to gather the sentences and words, but if we practised more we could use it in a better way"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 19). Another commented that they felt comfortable using DMs after learning them, stating, *"I mean, we learned them before, I feel comfortable using them, and it is easy"* (TBLT Interviewee 3, line 39). Furthermore, the participants believed that learning DMs benefited them, both in their lives in general, and academic lives, in particular, *"Of course, [they are] useful in my life and in my academic life"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 15).

Another participant expressed a similar view. Observing that they were at the beginning of their academic journey and would be required to make presentations, the student said, *"I feel they are very good because we still have approximately four years ahead of us and I think they will ask us to give presentations. Because of that, I feel they are useful"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 8). Another participant also emphasized their importance for giving presentations: *"I also feel that there will be something missing from the presentation if we do not use them"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 24).



In addition, one respondent noted that the DMs helped the learners with their speaking skills, explaining, *“It helped us speak fluently; because most people do not speak fluently. To be honest, I am one of them”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 24). A further participant confirmed the usefulness of learning DMs in terms of practising speaking skills, *“I feel they are useful, because in the first term, we learnt English but most of it ... the main focus was on vocabulary; we did not talk a lot”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 13).

In the next sub-section, participants’ opinions are identified in relation to the second category why DMs are useful and important.

### **6.3.2 Why discourse markers are useful and important**

The most common reason given for the usefulness of DMs was for organizing speech and paragraphs. When asked, one participant said, *“Yes, definitely important. Like ‘first, second, then’; all these words organise my story or the composition that I want to say”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 13). Moreover, another respondent explained that they think using DMs is important *“because my presentation and my ideas will be more organised”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 12). Similarly, according to another interviewee, *“They will section my presentation. For example, when I say ‘first’ and ‘second’. I know them and can use them, instead of using unorganised speech”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 13). Another interviewee emphasized how difficult it was to organise and move between topics easily and smoothly without using them. *“When I want to give a presentation, I do not know how to organise my presentation or move from one topic to another without them”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 15). Another participant stated, *“Yes, I benefited a lot, I can arrange any steps and describe anything, especially in English, and say ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘then’”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line

14). Another reason from another student from deductive PPP group, *“Yes, because we can link between sentences”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 11).

Two final comments made by the participants in relation to organization and structure of speech were: *“They made my talk organised instead of heaped up like this.”* (TBLT Interviewee 2, line 18), and *“It makes my paragraphs and my speech more organised”* (TBLT Interviewee 3, line 12).

The second reason identified by respondents regarding the usefulness of DMs was the ability to use different words for the same function, which is another aspect to be noted in relation to the importance of learning DMs. An example of this reason was obtained from a TBLT group participant, who noted that DMs are, *“useful because you do not have to stick to one word and you can use different words”* (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 17).

The responses show a significant overall agreement among participants regarding the importance and usefulness of learning DMs in relation to different factors. The participants identified several different reasons why learning the DMs was useful. Namely, that they could use them to link sentences, organise speech and paragraphs, and that different words could be used for the same function. In short, one participant emphasized the importance of learning DMs in terms of linking between sentences, but the majority of participants asserted that using DMs was useful in terms of general organization for example, organizing speech, organizing ideas, sectioning presentations, and moving between topics and one further participant highlighted their importance with regard to using different words for the same function. This section has shown that the participants held different beliefs towards learning DMs. It has also described the different ways in which participants agreed that learning DMs was useful. The next

section presents some examples of participants who did not agree that learning DMs is useful.

Only two participants, from the TBLT group, declared that learning DMs in the HE context was not useful as they were too simple, and they had already learnt them. For instance, one participant said, *“In my opinion, I think, for high level students, I feel it’s too simple, too basic, I think we all know that”* (TBLT Interviewee 1, line 8). Another participant from the same group stated, *“I feel we knew these words before, in high school. I feel I did not get any benefits from learning them”* (TBLT Interviewee 2, line 8). However, it is important to note that this interviewee (2) was referring specifically to the target DMs in this study, and believed that learning DMs is important and useful overall.

### **6.3.3 Participant awareness of discourse marker usage and function**

The third and final category, participant awareness of DM usage and function, highlighted participants’ understanding of DMs in terms of recognizing their use, functions, and meanings. The results reveal that through formal learning, participants became more aware of their function and usage. One participant explained how learning the target DMs enhanced their prior learning of these words. *“We have a background in them and now our knowledge has increased and we can use them more in sentences and in presentations”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 17). A similar view was expressed by another participant, who stated, *“I feel like some of the words, we learnt them, but we did not know how to use them and we did not know how to put them in sentences”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 7). Furthermore, one respondent noted that, *“We knew these words before. The only thing that we can benefit a lot from is to know where to use them and in which position”* (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 25). Another participant observed that they

learnt the use and function of the target DMs through the study, and that they did not know how to use them before *“because now I have learnt how to start the paragraph. Before this, I did not know how to start the paragraph”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 61). Moreover, another respondent noted that, prior to the study, she had not understood why DMs should be used, but that taking part in the research had led her to learn and use DMs appropriately and she explained her understanding of the exact use of DMs and used two of the target DMs – ‘right’ and ‘ok’ – as an example. *“For example, ‘ok’ and ‘right’, they were at the beginning of the talk, and honestly, I did not know how to use them, but with you I understand them fully”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 51). Similarly, one interviewee used the target DM ‘ok’ as an example to describe how she became more aware of its other potential uses: *“Yes, for example the word ‘ok’. My understanding was to use it when I agreed with something, but now I understand that we can use it at the end of a presentation to close the topic, or at the beginning of the topic”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 55).

Another example given by a participant was ‘to conclude’. The respondent explained how learning the target DMs helped her to differentiate between their different uses, particularly the meaning of ‘to conclude’, describing how learning the DMs, *“helped in that I know where to use this word and in which position, and also know the differences between them; such as what sequences to focus on, e.g. using the words ‘to conclude’. I have just learnt that the meaning is ‘to summarise’”* (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 49).

Thus, participants demonstrated how learning the DMs in the study developed their ability to recognize them, and helped them to understand the meaning of some they had already learnt, taught them to recognize them and their meanings, and become more aware of them. They also explained how teaching affected their overall understanding of DMs.

In brief, participants' awareness regarding the usage and the function of DMs has been highlighted and explained in this section, using examples taken from the interviews, and linked to a number of reasons identified by the participants: their prior learning experiences and raised awareness through their participation in the study.

In summary, two participants from the deductive PPP group, three from the inductive PPP group, and one from the TBLT group confirmed that learning the DMs improved their awareness of the usage, function and meaning of the DMs, and meant they became more aware of how to use them.

#### **6.3.4 The usefulness of discourse markers when giving presentations**

It is important to evaluate how much DMs help learners in giving presentations. Overall, the participants indicated that the DMs helped them deliver presentations in different ways. One participant commented that *"discourse markers have added a creative touch to the presentation"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 12). DMs also helped them in indicating the direction of speech, conveying meaning, getting their meaning across, and providing benefits for listeners. These aspects are all discussed below.

The first reason given by interviewees for the usefulness of DMs in giving presentations was indicating the direction of speech. To illustrate this, one participant said *"different words and different voice tones tell the listener that you are starting and when you are finished"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 12). Another participant agreed that the use of DMs indicates the direction of speech. *"Starting or closing the sentence with 'right' will let the person listening know whether the person who is talking is beginning or finishing"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 13). Participants also mentioned how using DMs enabled them to convey meaning, for example, *"I feel these words will get my meaning across"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 9), and *"It has a functional benefit*

*which is to get our meaning across in an easy and nice way*” (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 13).

Furthermore, some respondents noted the reasons for using DMs in presentations, such as to aid organization and understanding, and how these could benefit listeners. For example, that using DMs *“stops the listener getting bored while listening”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 12). Moreover, the use of DMs could mean that *“listeners will know how many topics are included in my presentation”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 16). Similarly, one participant commented that listeners would be able to understand the presentation and maintain concentration, *“It will make my presentation more organised and the listener will understand and follow me better”* (TBLT Interviewee 3, line 22). Another respondent noted that *“it will also be clearer to the listener”* (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 13).

In brief, students expressed several different views regarding how listeners could benefit from listening to presentations that use DMs, such as retaining the listeners’ attention, organizing the presentation, clearly stating the number of topics to be covered in a presentation, and enabling listeners to know when a presentation is beginning and ending.

Students’ opinions regarding the usefulness of learning DMs and using DMs in giving presentation have been highlighted with comments in this section. The next section describes the second main theme identified in the data, which is the usefulness or importance of practising DMs.

#### 6.4 Theme 2: Usefulness and importance of practising discourse markers

The second major theme that relates to DM practice was reflected in participants' perceptions of the usefulness and importance of practising DMs. Two emergent themes were identified in the data: 2.1) the usefulness of giving presentations, and 2.2) presentation differences before and after learning DMs. This theme is a reflection of a number of aspects introduced by the interviewees, including their opinions of the usefulness of practising DMs in terms of English improvement and personal perceptions.

One interviewee in particular expressed the desire for a class to practise the language, and emphasized the importance of practising in general: *"I hope we can have a class once a week to practise the grammar and the words"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 64).

Two other participants also agreed that practising the DMs improved their English skills. To illustrate, one student emphasized the importance of giving presentations, and said, *"I feel this is more important for improving our language and speech, we improved the way we talk and express ourselves in English"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 27). A further respondent stated, *"You can improve your English language easily"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 9).

Practising the newly taught DMs was another reason given by the participants for the usefulness of practising DMs in delivering presentations. For instance, one participant explained how it helped her understand their function and put them in sentences: *"It helped us to function these words more and to get more information from girls and put them in different sentences. We knew that these words would help us and benefit us in different ways"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 52). Another said, *"It helped me to practise the new words and put them in presentations"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 1, line

21). Participants also mentioned how practising made learning easier, and helped them to become familiar with the taught DMs. For example, a number of participants noted how the DMs were difficult at the beginning but, with practice, they became easy: “*At the beginning, it was difficult to use them but soon I felt that I get used to them*” (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 40), and, “*They get easier to use with practice*” (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 24). One respondent explained in detail how “*practising makes it easier for us, we now know how to talk ... it teaches us every time we want to give a presentation to use different words*” (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 21). Another said, “*It’s not difficult but it needs more practice so you get used to them*” (inductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 28). The usefulness of practising DMs was also because it helped students to use the words effectively. One learner explained how practising the DMs enabled them to put and use these words into sentences, “*In each presentation, we have to use them. Of course, it helps me and I consider it as practice for me to use them later on*” (inductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 55). A further interviewee commented that “*the words are the same, nothing is new or strange, but we know where to use them*” (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 32). Another added that “*because we already use them and it’s easy for me, if I saw them somewhere I would understand them and know how to use them*” (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 62).

So, the participants identified five aspects of the usefulness of practising DMs to:

1. apply the DMs taught in the previous lessons to the new lesson, which meant that they built up their DM usage from lesson-to-lesson: “*We applied more than one lesson in our presentation*” (deductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 79).
2. increase vocabulary: “*Practice increases our words, and we have more words*” (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 15).



3. help to use the words naturally: *"We do not need to write them. We say them spontaneously and repeat them; that's it"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 20).
4. help to remember the taught DMs: *"Of course, because I will never forget them"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 21).
5. help understand their function as previously: *"We did not know where to use them"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 30).

In brief, all participants from all groups identified various reasons for the usefulness of practising DMs. Their responses indicate that it is useful as it improves English, helps them understand and put DMs in sentences, prompts them to use the taught DMs, and makes learning DMs easier. Other reasons were also addressed by individual students, such as increasing vocabulary, remembering DMs, DM retention, applying the taught DMs to future lessons, and knowing how to use them in presentations.

#### **6.4.1 The usefulness of giving presentations**

Learners' opinions were explored with regard to whether presentations improved when they practised the taught DMs through giving presentations. A number of main points are highlighted, such as benefits of giving presentations, improvements in academic skills, and development of learner beliefs.

With regard to presentation improvement, participants expressed their opinion about the usefulness of practising the taught DMs. To illustrate, one respondent explained how it helped her to overcome her fear: *"It was my first time giving a presentation in front of girls and I was not really ... but you know I feel no, I overcame my fears of somebody asking me to do a presentation"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 30). Another student stated that practising giving a presentation enhanced her confidence: *"It's nice because I*

*will feel more confident and learn how to present in a good way, and how to stand up. I'll feel more comfortable doing it next time*" (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 20). Similarly, a learner from the TBLT group also said, *"We felt comfortable in giving presentations as we had a good length of time to give the presentation as well as prepare"* (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 41).

Furthermore, another participant explained that practising a presentation could be useful for overall academic skills: *"The presentation is useful in that you can talk about the topic for a limited time and you can improve your English language easily, and at the same time, you develop a good vocabulary and lots of other benefits"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 9).

Another interviewee from the TBLT group argued that practice would mean that they could use the DMs *"again and again in my speech and without thinking I will use them in my talk"* (TBLT Interviewee 2, line 22). Finally, one participant emphasized that more practice would lead to better presentations: *"But if we practised more, we could use DMs in a better way"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 19).

With regard to learners' beliefs, a number of participants described the difficulty of giving presentations. For example, one student explained that it would be easier if presentation skills were taught by a teacher: *"Everything has advantages and disadvantages, and of course I get used to it. I mean, from my first day in the foundation year, if the teacher taught the presentations and gave us a topic every day and let us talk about it, of course I would see it as a very easy thing, and I would be able to do it very easily"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 57). Some other participants said they had not done a presentation before and found it challenging, *"The barrier was, it was the first time in my life"*

(deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 60), *“At the beginning, I actually did not know what presentation meant or how I would write one, but after learning these words I knew”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 22). Another interviewee mentioned feeling incompetent in terms of their language and presentation skills: *“At the beginning I accepted it, but lately I have felt that I am not really good at presentations, and for me it was the first time in my life and I saw it as very important”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 53). Another of the participants explained that she had not done a presentation in English before, and therefore did not possess the basic skills to do so successfully and stated: *“We do not have the basics in Arabic that we have in English; we have to have the basics in both I mean”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 16).

#### 6.4.2 Presentation differences before and after learning the discourse markers

This theme explores the students’ experiences of giving presentations before and after learning the DMs. Table 38 shows which participants in each group had (YES) or had not (NO) given group presentations before.

Group presentation	Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4
Groups	TBLT	YES	YES	YES	YES
	Deductive PPP	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Inductive PPP	YES	NO	NO YES, in Arabic	NO YES, in Arabic

**Table 38:** Participant presentation experience before instruction

With regard to the students in the TBLT group who had done group presentations before, Participant 1 indicated that the only difference was the addition of DMs, *“Yes, it’s only different because of adding so many DMs”* (TBLT, interviewee 1, line 34). A second participant said that there was no difference, and a third identified differences, such as using PowerPoint slides previously, and that there were no rules – just talking. However, a fourth participant stated that a presentation delivered after learning DMs was improved by the knowledge of how to use them.

With regard to the inductive PPP group, one participant said there were no differences between presentations given before and after DM instruction. A second mentioned that they had given questions and answers in front of the class, but not a presentation, “*In the first semester, our teacher gave us a question and each student had to stand up and give her opinion about it*” (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 31). Finally, the third and fourth participants confirmed that they had given group presentations in Arabic but not in English, “*In Arabic yes, I did, but in English I never did it before*” (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 28).

### **6.5 Theme 3: Usefulness of teaching methods (interviews)**

A third major theme identified in the data with regard to students and their perceptions was *the usefulness of the teaching methods*. During the data analysis, three sub-themes also emerged: 3.1) learners’ awareness of the teaching method, 3.2) the similarities and differences between the normal teaching method and the new method, and 3.3) the usefulness of group work. In this section, the interview data is reviewed, and then the exit slips are considered in relation to these themes.

This theme contains a number of key factors, such as learner perception of the implemented teaching method. The interview data indicates that some participants had a positive attitude towards the teaching methods. Furthermore, other interviewees mentioned specific aspects of the teaching methods, such as group work and giving presentations. The participants’ attitudes were divided into three main categories, based on the three groups: attitudes towards the respective approach. Consequently, the next section reviews the interviewees’ attitudes towards the teaching method implemented for each group respectively.

From the deductive PPP group, one participant emphasized the importance of learning through the PPP approach by giving an example, stating: *“If we continue learning by this method that would be better for our English. I have watched a video and heard that if you want to learn English language do not memorise the vocabulary but listen. I mean listen and speak”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 48). She also noted how the teaching method helped students to use the target DMs, and highlighted the benefit of working with others when using the target words: *“It helped us to function these words more and to get more information from girls and put them in different sentences”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 52). Furthermore, another participant believed that the PPP approach brought more spirit to the lesson in comparison to the teaching methods implemented by their own teacher: *“I did enjoy it and the class was presented in a good spirit instead of the boring lesson and the explanation on the board”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 49). Other interviewees within the same group (deductive PPP) also expressed positive attitudes towards different aspects of the teaching method, such as group work, topics, giving presentations. which are discussed later in this section. However, when asked whether they liked this approach or not, interviewee 1 admitted that she found giving presentations challenging because she had never done so before: *“At the beginning I accepted it, but lately I have felt that I am not really good at presentations”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 53).

From the inductive PPP approach group, one interviewee described the lesson procedures and discussed the benefits they brought. They stated that the technique helped them to think and to work in groups: *“It let me think. I mean, I listened first and, after that, I discussed and found ideas, then listened and added ideas. After that I wrote and integrated my ideas with the group’s ideas”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 51). Another participant liked the teaching method because it helped her to practise English.

She commented, *"I feel it improves my skills"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, Line 52), and further explained: *"The practice. I mean, because we did not practise English with each other"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 54).

From the TBLT group, one participant remarked that the method enabled them to work freely and stay in their comfort zone: *"because you made us express things in our own thoughts, in our comfort zones, so we wrote it and everything"* (TBLT Interviewee 1, line 52). A different interviewee believed that the approach could have a long-term learning benefit: *"maybe your method is long lasting because it helps us learn from our mistakes"* (TBLT Interviewee 3, line 47). Finally, the other interviewees (2 & 4) expressed positive attitudes towards the group work, which will be covered in sub-theme 3.2.

This section has discussed the participants' attitudes towards the teaching methods. The next section highlights some of interviewees' suggestions and preferences in relation to each teaching method implemented by the researcher. The learners gave a number of suggestions in relation to the new teaching techniques, such as using visual aids. One interviewee observed that *"the teaching method is nice, but if you use visual aids it will make the class more interesting, that's it"* (TBLT Interviewee 3, line 57). Another participant suggested that *"it would be better if there is more movement, not only sitting"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 35). One respondent also suggested that the role of the teacher should be more prominent, because they are used to traditional, teacher-centred education methods in which the teacher gives the rules first and then examples. The interviewee stated, *"There is a lack of the teacher's role, maybe because we get used to the school and that the teacher gives us everything"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 10). Similarly, another participant explained, *"I like when the person tells me what I am supposed to do and then I apply it"* (TBLT Interviewee 3, line 45).

### 6.5.1 Learners' awareness of the teaching method

Some participants demonstrated an awareness of the teaching method when they were asked to describe the lesson procedures, though others were not able to explain it properly, and some expressed doubts about it. The reason for asking participants if they noticed any lesson organization was to make sure they were aware of the new method, and were able to identify whether it was similar or different to the one used by their usual teacher.

All participants from the inductive PPP group attempted to describe the lesson procedures and some demonstrated a good knowledge and awareness of the teaching method, and were able to describe the lesson procedures. For instance, a student in the deductive PPP group observed: *"At the beginning you review the previous lessons, after that you tell us what we are going to learn today, and then give us examples and words, and after that we apply and read them"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 57). Furthermore, another learner from the same group stated: *"Yes, I feel like, at the beginning you give us words and we work on them in the presentation and talk to each other"* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 44).

A participant from the inductive PPP group described the lesson structure in detail: *"There were arranged steps. First, we listened, then we filled in the gaps. After that, we checked the answers with you and we presented our presentation. There were the same steps in each lesson"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 41). In addition, another student from the same group explained: *"We started with the discussion, I mean, and then we started the listening and then started talking about the topic. And right after filling the sheet, we wrote down the DMs and then we wrote our presentations"* (inductive PPP Interviewee 1, line 47).

Likewise, participants from the TBLT group also described the lesson in detail. For example, Interviewee 2 observed: *“First, you gave us a topic, and then you gave us enough time to prepare the presentation. After that, we gave the presentation. After that, you told us what we learned from the lesson and you gave us the worksheet”* (TBLT Interviewee 2, line 46). Finally, another respondent in the same group remarked, *“I feel, as I said before, we applied first and then you told us the main idea”* (TBLT Interviewee 3, line 43). However, other participants had some doubts and were not able to give a detailed description of the lessons. For example, a participant from the deductive PPP group said, *“I did not notice, honestly, except for the listening and giving us the worksheet”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 45). Another interviewee from the TBLT group explained, *“It had but we did not notice, we were, like, too distracted”* (TBLT Interviewee 1, line 42).

Based on their descriptions of the lesson procedures, interviewees were asked if there were any differences between their everyday classes and the classes with the researcher. This enquiry sought to gain in depth insights into the teaching methods in this context (whether different or not) and whether learners preferred the traditional ones or those implemented in the study. The next section presents the similarities and differences observed by the students between the teaching methods implemented by the researcher and the usual teaching method used.

### **6.5.2 Similarities and differences between the usual teaching method and the new method**

To truly understand the efficacy of each new teaching method studied, it is important to investigate the participants’ notions of the similarities and differences between the usual ones implemented by their teachers and those of the researcher. A comparison table has



been created to easily highlight the similarities and differences observed by the students in the three groups.

Teaching method	Usual classes	Researcher's classes
TBLT	P.1 Sticking to the coursebook, make it formal, no comfort zone.	P.1 Freedom, using our own words, talking about our own experiences, not sticking to the main book lessons.
	P.2 No presentation, studying grammar & vocabulary, explanation through projector.	P.2 Depending on ourselves, focusing on presentations.
	P.3 Teacher gives us the main ideas, we do exercises.	P.3 Teacher gave us the topic, we gave a presentation first then identified the main ideas.
	P.4 Old method (doing individual or group work).	P.4 Learning more words that we did not use a lot, free talking, learning to use words in precise positions.
Deductive PPP	P.1 Same method.	P.1 Same method but focusing on giving presentations.
	P.2 Teacher explains more and give more examples.	P.2 Same method.
	P.3 Focusing on the coursebook, vocabulary, grammar & paragraphs, using the school method to remember words, and doing homework.	P.3 Talking fluently and expressing ourselves.
	P.4 No group discussion, based on coursebook and restricted to it, doing exercises based on rules from the book	P.4 Sitting in groups, discussing with each other, no coursebook, time to organise ideas.
Inductive PPP	P.1 Students engage actively, coursebook based	P.1 No engagement as it is not compulsory.
	P.2 No application of what we study.	P.2 You gave us a rule, told us to apply it, bring our own sentences & examples, self-learning.
	P.3 Do exercises in groups and give individual answers.	P.3 Give a model of presentation, variety of topics.
	P.4 Old teaching method like in school.	P.4 Self-learning, the teacher's role is as a guide.

**Table 39:** Similarities and differences between normal teaching methods and the new method (P = Participant)

Table 39 demonstrates that students in the TBLT group identified a number of differences between the teaching methods employed in their usual classes and the new approach. For example, their usual classes were based mainly on coursebooks, and the teacher gave them grammar and vocabulary. Students carried out exercises and gained no presentation skills. One participant described how *“in the old method, they tell you to work individually, or sometimes there is group work; but this method [researcher's method] is more beneficial for knowing more words such as right and ok - we did not use them a lot.*

*I mean, we also felt free about talking and the time was not restricted”* (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 47). Another student explained how the applied teaching method enabled them to learn within their comfort zone, *“Our normal teaching method, as I said it, sticks to the book, and here [in the researcher’s class] we are in our comfort zone”* (TBLT Interviewee 1, line 54).

Moving to the second group (deductive PPP), two participants believed that the two methods were the same, but the new lessons focused more on presentations. They also noted that in their normal classes, the teacher explained more and gave more examples. A third participant identified some further differences, as she described how their everyday classes were restricted to the coursebook, and focused on learning grammar structures and some words and, at the end, completing homework. The participant referred to it as the *“school”* method and stated that, *“I feel that the method, like the method used in schools, I do not feel I benefited a lot from it”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 32). The interviewee continued to describe the newly-applied teaching method as, *“better than studying from the book and spoon-feeding us. It makes us say sentences and I mean talk fluently, it is useful because we studied a lot”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 46). A fourth participant from this group also explained that their normal classes were based on the coursebook and on completing exercises based on instructions given in the book, and there were no group discussions. In fact, the student identified a number of differences: *“The first difference is that it was okay to make mistakes and say any information, but in our normal classes the information is restricted to the book and we say things from the book. The second difference is that we were in groups and we discussed together. The third difference is that there was time to organise your ideas, unlike in the normal lessons. And also, sitting in a circle in groups”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 51).

Students in the inductive PPP group identified some differences between their normal teaching method and the new method. For instance, one participant commented that students engaged more actively in the normal classes, as it was compulsory. Alternatively, another interviewee said that there was no application of what they studied in their usual classes in comparison to the new class as it offered self-learning. This was clear in the statement, *“Yes [it is] different, because we learn by ourselves. You give us a topic like shopping and we learn words about shopping and retrieve them from the dictionary”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 56). A third participant described a difference by referring to the presentation model saying, *“From one side, you listen to the model of presentation and try to do the same yourself”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 33). Finally, a fourth participant described their normal classes as the *“old”* method and commented, *“Our teacher’s style is like the old teaching, for example, like in schools”* (Inductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 47). The interviewee went on to describe inductive PPP as self-learning, *“Your teaching method is self-learning. Your role is a guide, but its self-learning”* (inductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 49).

### **6.5.3 The usefulness of group work**

The usefulness of group work is another sub-theme that emerged from the data. Most of the participants preferred group work rather than individual work for a number of reasons. It enables different ideas to emerge, which led to good presentations, *“because each student brings an idea and as a result our presentation will be good”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 2, line 51). It enables them to get to know other people in the class, *“The best thing: working with groups, I get to know the girls in my group ... before that I did not know them”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 8). Furthermore, it can help them learn new vocabulary, one participant responded, *“Yes, in learning new words”* (deductive PPP Interviewee 4, line 37), and opportunities for discussion with other students: *“It gives us*

*the opportunity to discuss in groups, because in normal classes we do not discuss with each other that much*” (TBLT Interviewee 2, line 39). Another participant elaborated on this, observing that, *“in groups we can correct one another’s mistakes”* (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 30). Finally, one student believed that group work was useful in fostering co-operation with others: *“I feel that group work is better than the individual work. As I said, the cooperation makes us stronger”* (TBLT Interviewee 4, line 40). However, some of the students did not think it was useful due to a lack of co-operation between some students.

In brief, this study used learner comments and opinions as a reflective lens to view the situation from the learner perspective. Through the data collection techniques used, it was possible to gauge reactions to the normal teaching methods in comparison to each newly-introduced method. The investigations revealed that the students noticed differences between their usual learning practices and the one implemented for their group in this study. Moreover, the data provided the opportunity to identify these differences, and determine which are the most effective.

Consequently, based on the learners’ comments, a picture emerged regarding teaching methods in the EFL context. At the same time, it was possible to explore the usefulness of all three teaching methods. All the results were then linked to the quantitative findings in the discussion section, in order to examine the relationship between each teaching method and learning DM. It was also important to investigate learner performance, and measure the effectiveness of explicit teaching on learning and acquisition.

Table 37 and the learners’ descriptions of the teaching methods indicate that learners in the Saudi EFL context are taught via traditional methods. Participants in the deductive

PPP group, described their normal teaching method as based on teaching grammar, vocabulary, using no coursebooks and no group work. The other two groups also demonstrated that their normal teaching methods are teacher-centred, based on learning grammar and vocabulary. Thus, it is clear that teaching techniques used in Saudi EFL English classes are still based heavily on traditional, teacher-centred teaching methods.

### 6.6 Theme 3: Usefulness of teaching methods (exit slips)

All students were given exit slips (prompts) at the end of the instruction period. The reason for using exit slips, as explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), was to collect immediate written feedback from all students on whether they found the teaching method useful, and the reasons for this. Table 40 shows the number of responses from each group to the following question: Do you think the way we studied in these classes was useful to you?

Groups	Useful	Not useful
TBLT	N= 10	N= 6
Deductive PPP	N= 9	N= 5
Inductive PPP	N= 12	N= 4

**Table 40:** The number of responses from the exit slips (useful/not useful)

In addition, Table 41, summarises and highlights students' responses to the exit slip questions.

Groups	Useful	Not useful
TBLT	Preparing them for academia Improving English skills Long term retention Practising Using the taught words for different functions Better than preparing presentations at home	For high-level students Presentation skills are not essential Did not learn new things – repeated words
Deductive PPP	Learning new words Writing, preparing, organizing and giving presentations Preparing for academia Getting information on how to organise talks Overcoming the fear of speaking	Repeated lessons Boring, not interesting Difficult to prepare presentations Two students provided no reasons
Inductive PPP	Group work Improving English language skills Giving short presentations Using the taught words in speaking, writing and giving presentations Knowing other students, exchange ideas and experiences. English improvement (learning new words). Enjoyable, effective for group work.	Waste of time Boring Two provided no reasons

**Table 41:** Students’ answers to exit slips

#### 6.6.1 The usefulness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Ten students out of the sixteen who completed the exit slips believed that this method was useful, and gave a number of reasons for this from different perspectives. The table above presents the reasons why learners believed that learning through TBLT was useful. Firstly, one participant stated that it prepared them for future academic endeavours, *“It prepared us for the next academic level”*. Another believed that it improved their language skills, *“It improved our English language writing and presentation skills in a short time, which is a good thing”*. In addition, another student argued that that TBLT helped them to remember the taught words for a long time, *“We practised and applied what we learnt, which will last for long time, and in every lesson, we built new information based on the previous lessons”*. Furthermore, two students explained how it enabled them to learn and use the new words (DMs) for different functions, asserting that TBLT was *“useful in helping us to learn how to use different words for sequencing, and giving examples. The topics were good and interesting”*. Finally, four other students wrote that it helped them to practise their presentations. To illustrate: *“[It is] useful*

*because it helps students to practise presentations, which helps them in organising their ideas” and “Practice makes presentations easier”.*

The students who said that TBLT was not useful indicated a number of reasons. Four learners believed that they did not learn any new things. For example, one stated: *“I attended only three classes and I did not feel that I learned new things”* and one argued that, *“It is not important to give presentations in English. We tried hard to write presentations but they were really difficult for us”.*

#### **6.6.2 The usefulness of the deductive Presentation-Practice-Production approach (PPP)**

Nine students out of fourteen believed this method was useful. The table above presented the main points why the learners thought that deductive PPP was useful. Firstly, they described how the technique helped them in learning new words, to illustrate, *“We learned new words and applied them to our presentation, which was really useful”.* They also noted that it helped them in a variety of skills, such as writing, preparing, organizing and giving presentations. According to one participant, *“We learned how to give presentations, and how to prepare and organise our presentations by using DMs”.* Furthermore, similar to the students in the TBLT group, learners in the deductive PPP approach believed that the technique would help to prepare them for future academic endeavours: *“It was good practice and experience for the following academic years”.* Finally, one participant explained that it helped her to overcome her fear of speaking by enhancing her presentation skills, *“Personally, I benefited a lot from this method by overcoming my fear of speaking in front of [an]audience”.*

However, two students identified why deductive PPP was not useful to them, and expressed their feelings. For instance, one learner said that all the lessons were repeated. Another commented that this teaching method was boring and not interesting, and finally that they found it difficult to prepare the presentations. In addition, three students who ticked '*not useful*' did not provide any reasons.

### **6.6.3 The usefulness of the inductive Presentation-Practice-Production approach (PPP)**

Twelve students out of sixteen said this method was useful, and five said it was not. Learners' responses are highlighted in the following points. Firstly, students considered the teaching method enjoyable and effective because it enhanced group work and relations among classmates. One student described inductive PPP as "*[a] useful and enjoyable method as it gave me the opportunity to know my group members and exchange ideas and experiences*". Furthermore, two students gave another reason for the effectiveness of inductive PPP which was that it improved their English language skills, such as giving short presentations and learning new words. One learner commented: "*It is a good and useful method because it enables the student to use new words and use them in writing and in giving presentations*", and, "*It is a good method because all students were engaged in the lessons and in preparing and giving presentations*". However, four students asserted that it was not useful, for which two gave reasons and two did not. One learner believed that inductive PPP was a boring method, while the other believed it was a waste of time.

The majority of learners showed a positive attitude towards the teaching methods and most students thought they were useful (twelve from the inductive PPP group, nine from the deductive PPP group and ten from TBLT group). Those learners who thought the



teaching methods were not useful either did not give reasons or expressed their personal feelings, such as the approach was boring or a waste of time.

## **6.7 Summary**

This chapter presented and analysed the findings of the qualitative data. In the next chapter (Chapter 7), the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data are discussed in relation to the literature review and the research questions. The chapter answers each research question quantitatively and qualitatively, linking them to the literature review. Triangulation of the data is also conducted to link the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data and arrive at the final conclusions.

## **Chapter Seven: Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The previous chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) presented the findings of the quantitative and the qualitative data respectively. The aim of this research was to determine the effect of three different teaching approaches on learners' learning and acquisition of a set of SDMs. The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss these findings in relation to research questions and relevant literature review. The quantitative data analysis provided answers to the first and second research questions and the qualitative data analysis answered the third research question and attempted to also partly provide answers to the first and second research questions from a qualitative perspective.

The quantitative data were obtained through tests and the qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and written feedback from students. Furthermore, there are some extracts from learners' interviews and exit slips in this chapter which are repeated from the qualitative data findings (Chapter 6). The reason for repeating these extracts is to aid the discussion of the findings; the extracts are limited to brief examples and reference has been made to full examples. The answers to the research questions posed by this study were based on the associated tests (quantitative), interviews (qualitative) or both.

**7.2 First Research Question: To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi English as a Foreign Language higher education context help students to learn and use them in their presentation?**

**Sub question:** Do learners consider learning and practising structural discourse markers useful and why?

This research question was answered on the basis of the analysis of the quantitative data obtained through tests and, qualitatively, on the basis of the analysis of the first and second themes the usefulness of learning DMs and the usefulness of practising DMs respectively. The first research question sought to explore the DMs that Saudi EFL learners use when giving presentations in an immediate post-test following the instruction, and was carried out to measure the effect of treatment on learning DMs. According to Schmitt (2010), post-tests determine “whether the treatment had any effect” (p.156). Two delayed tests were conducted to find out the effect of treatment upon acquisition of the target DMs and to find out the long-term effect of the treatment. The scores of the delayed tests will be analysed and discussed in order to identify the effect of treatment upon acquisition and thus answer the second research question which is: Which teaching approach, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive), or TBLT has a long-term effect on the acquisition of DMs? (See section 7.3).

The reason for the delayed tests is to examine learners’ use and gain of DMs following the teaching period. How effectively the DMs were used was evaluated on the basis of how many specific ones the learners used in their presentations following explicit instruction. The test was in the form of group presentations and was held and transcribed at four times: pre-instruction, post-instruction, three weeks post-instruction and four weeks post-instruction, in order to find out how many target SDMs the students used in their presentations (See Tables 20, 21, 22 and 23 for raw scores and the overall counts of DMs in Chapter 5).

A Kruskal-Wallis test was run to compare the mean scores of three independent groups on the pre-test presentations. The mean scores in the pre-test for TBLT were 4.93 and .3125 for deductive PPP and 2.058 for inductive PPP. There was a statistically

significant difference between TBLT and deductive and inductive PPP in favour of TBLT which has the highest mean score of 4.93 (significant level 0.00). There is no statistical significant difference between deductive PPP and inductive PPP (significant level 0.29). The results of the mean scores demonstrate that learners used some of the target DMs prior to instruction on them (See Table 25 in Chapter 5 for statistical results and mean scores).

With regard to the post-test mean scores, there was a statistically significant difference between TBLT and inductive PPP in favour of inductive PPP with the highest mean score of 11.5882 (significant level 0.00) and between TBLT and deductive PPP in favour of deductive PPP with the highest mean score of 12.687 (significant level 0.00). The mean score for TBLT was 6.875 (See Table 25 in Chapter 5 for statistical results and mean scores).

On the basis of the results of the first Kruskal-Wallis test, it can be seen that the mean scores improved from the pre-test when learners had no instruction on the target forms to the post-test immediately following instruction on the target forms. All groups showed an increase in the mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test. Both deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups scored significantly higher than the TBLT group in terms of the number of SDMs used. Statistically, the difference is significant between treatment groups, the deductive PPP and inductive PPP were significantly different in comparison to the TBLT group. The findings support the findings of a number of studies in terms of improvement in the use of the target DMs in the post-test when compared to the pre-test or other tests (Jones, 2009; Sadeghi & Heidaryan, 2012; Rahimi & Riasati, 2012; Hernández, 2013).

The results suggest that the mean scores of all groups improved from the pre-test to the post-test which indicates that all teaching methods had a positive impact on learners' learning and use of the target DMs in the short-term, immediately after instruction on the DMs. However, there was increased use of the target SDMs in deductive and inductive PPP in comparison with TBLT according to the mean scores for both the deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups. Therefore, it can be argued that explicitly teaching DMs in the Saudi EFL context enabled students to use them in presentations as evidenced by the improvement in the use of the target DMs from pre-test to post-test. The deductive and inductive PPP groups scored higher and were thus significantly different from the TBLT group.

The results are surprising as they contradict the findings of the pilot study in terms of the number of DMs used, which indicated that both the TBLT group and PPP group improved at the same rate in the post-test and therefore there were no significant differences between the two. It is difficult to explain this result in terms of the differences between the results of the TBLT group in the pilot study and in the main study but it might be related to a number of other factors. Consequently, this may have caused the differences, such as low motivation, the examination effect or, simply, the fact that the learners may not have been ready to learn the target words. As Ellis (1990) notes, L2 learners acquire items of the L2 when they are ready. Another possible explanation for this is that the TBLT approach was too difficult for this specific group of learners since in the TBLT approach, learners focused on meaning and completing the task before focusing on form (in this case, the SDMs).

The study's findings demonstrated that teaching DMs explicitly in this context helped students in learning DMs. Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) argue that, within the Saudi EFL

context, “explicit classroom teaching should be provided to improve the knowledge of four basic skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking” (p. 117). It is evident from the findings that teaching DMs explicitly aids learners to learn and acquire these aspects of language and to use them in presentations, specifically, sequencing, opening and closing statements, giving examples, showing turning points in talk and summarising. It is apparent from the findings that all the treatments had a positive effect on the learners’ use of the target SDMs.

It is essential to highlight that the findings parallel the findings of past research in the fields of teaching DMs in terms of learners’ score difference from pre-test to post-test and the impact of using multiple teaching approaches. For example, Jones (2009) found that the scores of both groups (PPP approach and LA approach) improved from the pre-test to the post-test. In this current study, all groups improved from pre-test to post-test.

In addition, the results are consistent with SLA theories. For example, Krashen (1982) argued that language learning relates to the explicit explanation of linguistic rules. Hence, based on Krashen’s argument, it can thus be suggested that explicit teaching of the target DMs helped learners in using and learning them. Learners were given input of DMs through explicit teaching and, as a result, the production of DMs increased and improved when compared to the pre-test prior to which the learners had no input regarding the target DMs. In brief, it can be suggested that comprehensible input should be given to learners in order to improve their language learning through explicit instruction.

Swain’s output hypothesis is another L2 theory which supports the findings of this research. The findings are also consistent with Swain’s (1985) output hypothesis that suggests that if language is (written/spoken) produced, learning/acquisition may occur.

The results corroborate the ideas of both Krashen and Swain in that explicit teaching of DMs and producing the language by giving oral presentations helped learners in learning them. Swain and Lapkin argued that “output facilitates second language learning” (1995, p.371). It can be noted that helping learners to produce language promotes their learning and enhances their presentation skills. With regard to the theory underpinning the PPP approach, Anderson’s skill-building theory (see Chapter 2) is explained in relation to the role of the practice stage in this theory. It can be argued that practising DMs promotes learning, as when learners practised them in the receptive task (Stage 2: Associative Stage), they were able to use them in the productive task (Stage 3: Autonomous Stage). Both deductive and inductive PPP changed declarative knowledge of SDMs into procedural knowledge through practice and production of DMs. Accordingly, the learners’ scores improved from pre-test to post-test. It can be argued that both stages (practice and production) within the inductive and deductive PPP approach led to learning of DMs in the short-term. Lyster and Sato noted that language fluency involves, “a gradual transition from effortful use to more automatic use of the target language, with the ultimate goal of achieving faster and more accurate processing” (2013, p.71).

It can thus be suggested that explicit teaching of SDMs helped encourage their use and enhanced the students’ ability to give a presentation. In line with this argument, Aidinlou and Shahrokhi Mehr (2012) found that “explicit teaching of DMs seems to influence all language skills since they are important components of language” (p.15). Innajih (2007 cited in Aidinlou & Shahrokhi Mehr, 2012) pointed out that teaching DMs explicitly to EFL learners has a positive impact on learners’ language skills. In this particular study, explicit instruction of SDMs influenced the learning and their usage as well as presentation skills.

As mentioned earlier, the first research question was addressed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The following paragraphs focus on qualitative data obtained from interviews in order to find answers to the following sub-question: what are learners' perspectives on the usefulness of learning and practising SDMs? precisely with reference to themes 1 and 2 which are: the usefulness of learning DMs and the usefulness of practising DMs respectively. Furthermore, a number of students (4 from each of the three groups, totalling 12 students) were asked about their opinions on learning and practising DMs and whether or not they find them useful and important. They were asked to justify their answers and give some reasons.

The results demonstrated that the interview participants in both deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups, agreed that both learning and practising DMs was useful and important when giving presentations. In the TBLT group, three interviewees said they are useful, however, two said they were too simple for their level of English. However, learners' negative comments (TBLT group) towards learning cannot be generalized to all learners in this group as only two interviewees indicated that learning DMs is not useful. These responses and written feedback will be examined further to identify if there any other reasons behind their low scores and their attitude to DMs. However, despite the negative responses, participants agreed that learning DMs helped them to use them appropriately and apply them in their presentations.

Furthermore, in order to gain more insight into the usefulness of learning and practising DMs, interviewees were asked why they think DMs are useful. A number of reasons were given from different perspectives and all were based on the structural function of using DMs, which enables students to structure their speech and benefits them in terms of different aspects, such as linking between sentences, organising the talk and using



different DMs for the same function, for example, choosing from a number of DMs to open the topic or to shift between topics. A supportive quote from the literature on SDMs was that they are used to “orientate and organize the discourse in progress and signal links and transitions between topics” (Fung & Carter, 2007 p. 435). This quotation supports the participants’ claim that SDMs help them to make a “*link between sentences*” (Deductive PPP interviewee 3, line 11) and organise their presentations (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3 for more examples). In the same vein, Brown and Yule (1983) remarked that structural markers symbolise optional signals and the use of such markers helps speakers to organise their talk. Among the benefits for using DMs, Al-wossabi (2014) lists that they lead students to produce coherent sentences, link their ideas and avoid communication breakdowns. These benefits are consistent with the data obtained from interviewing learners.

The benefits of using DMs showed that learners were involved in a number of cognitive strategies as they were practising DMs. Some examples of these activities, as noted by Richards and Schmidt (2010), are repeating words or phrases (rehearsal) and organizing. It can be said that explicit instruction has a positive impact on cognitive learning. Furthermore, cognition involvement in SLA is about using the language through interaction, to understand ideas, experiences and feelings, convey meaning to others and organise ideas, all of which were highlighted by the interviewees.

The results demonstrate that learners were not aware of the structural function of these words as actual DMs prior to instruction and they did not know how to use them structurally in their presentation. This indicates that teaching SDMs explicitly draws EFL learners’ attention to them and assists them in using them in their presentations. Consequently, there is a need to focus on these aspects of the language in order to help

learners to use them more in their presentations. Al-wossabi (2014) emphasises the importance of introducing DMs not only to increase EFL learners' awareness of their use in oral output, but also to encourage learners to employ them.

Two students from the TBLT group noted that the learning DMs was too simple for them: *"In my opinion I think, for high-level students, I feel it's too simple, too basic, I think we all know that"* (TBLT interviewee 1, line 8) and *"I felt they were useful but at the same time too simple"* (TBLT interviewee 4, line 9). The findings from the TBLT group, in particular, support Krashen's claim (1985) that if the input is either too hard or too easy for learners, the learning of such input does not occur. It is important to note that with a small sample size, caution must be applied as it is difficult to make claims based on responses from two interviewees only. In addition, as indicated before, the main purpose of using qualitative data is to explore learners' opinions and gain more insights about teaching methods in this context rather than generalising the findings to the wider population.

It is interesting to note that practising the use of DMs in presentations helped the majority of interviewees in different ways. For example, learners provide a number of reasons in relation to how DMs aided them in structuring their presentation, such as organising their talk, indicating the direction of their topic, conveying meaning and other benefits to the listeners. For example, an inductive PPP participant emphasised the importance of DMs in giving a presentation in terms of organising and moving between topics: *"When I want to give a presentation I do not know how to organise my presentation or move from one topic to another without them"* (Inductive PPP interviewee 2, line 15). Another interviewee commented: *"Starting or closing the sentence with 'right' will let the person listening know whether the person who is talking is beginning or finishing"* (Deductive

PPP interviewee 1, line 13). Another interviewee said: *“It will make my presentation more organised and the listener will understand and follow me better”* (TBLT interviewee 3, line 22) (see Section 6.3 for more quotations). In light of these findings, Hernández (2013) noted that “A discourse marker was considered to be effective if it contributed to structuring and sequencing of information or if it highlighted details of the narration” (p. 19-20).

One participant emphasised how not using DMs may negatively impact the presentation: *“I feel that there will be something missing from the presentation if we do not use them”* (Inductive PPP interviewee 3, Line 24). In line with this finding, Brinton (1996) believes that if DMs were omitted from presentations they may be acceptable grammatically but will “be judged ‘unnatural’, ‘awkward’, ‘disjointed’, ‘impolite’, ‘unfriendly’ or ‘dogmatic’ within the communicative context” (pp. 35–36).

In regard to the second theme, the usefulness of practising DMs, the findings also revealed that students held positive attitudes with regard to practising DMs and using them in presentations. The respondents provided a number of advantages for practising DMs and they confirmed how important the ability to give presentations is in their academic life and in preparing them for the upcoming years in academia. As one of the interviewees said: *“I feel they are very good because we still have approximately four years ahead of us”* (Deductive PPP interviewee 2, line 8).

Thornbury (2005) emphasises the fact that oral presentations help improve learners’ English language skills. The students confirmed Thornbury’s claim in their feedback, with one interviewee saying, for instance: *“We improved the way we talk and express ourselves in English”* (Deductive PPP interviewee 3, line 27). Another participant added

that: *"You can improve your English language easily"* (Deductive PPP interviewee 1, line 9). Most of the respondents who commented on the positive effect of giving presentations were in the deductive PPP group and it was apparent that they needed to acquire this skill to improve their English, as they had not given group presentations before. It can be claimed that giving presentations helped learners understand the function of the DMs and understand how to input them into sentences, which improved their English language skills.

Some students described how they found DMs difficult to comprehend at the beginning but how practising using them helped them understand them better. Among the comments made by the students are: *"At the beginning it was difficult to use them but soon I felt that I get used to them"* (Inductive PPP interviewee 2, line 40); *"They get easier to use with practice"* (Deductive PPP interviewee 4, line 24); and *"Practising makes it easier for us, we now know how to talk ... it teaches us every time we want to give a presentation to use different words"* (TBLT interviewee 4, line 21). In addition, teaching DMs lesson by lesson helped them to build up knowledge of different DMs and their different uses and functions, and apply as many of them as possible, as evidenced in the quote: *"We applied more than one lesson in our presentation"* (Deductive PPP interviewee 2, line 79).

It is evident, therefore, that practice in the input sessions helped learners to use the target words and to organise their presentation. It can be said that practising DMs in the current study had a positive influence on learners' performance, for instance, it helps students in the organisation of the speech, understanding DMs and using DMs.

In terms of the effectiveness of giving presentations as a learning tool, participants from all three groups were able to identify a number of benefits of this practice. For example,

respondents from the deductive PPP group explained how giving presentations helped them to overcome their fears. Likewise, an inductive PPP respondent emphasised how giving a presentation enhanced her confidence. In the TBLT group, interviewees highlighted how they feel comfortable when working freely. For example, a respondent from the TBLT group explained how they were comfortable when giving the presentation because they had enough time to prepare for it. It can be concluded that, practising giving presentations has a number of advantages on learners' ability to give them.

The positive attitudes towards practising DMs encourage students to use them in their presentations, resulting in an increase in the scores obtained in the post-test (immediately following the instruction of DMs) when compared to the pre-test scores (when they have no instruction of the target DMs). Thus, the findings based on the qualitative data (learners' opinions) support the findings based on the quantitative data (test scores).

With regard to the difficulty of giving a presentation, interviewees mentioned a number of different reasons why they find it difficult. Among the reasons given by the members of the deductive PPP group was that giving a presentation is challenging. This might be because they had not given presentations before. One unanticipated reason provided was that they did not know what giving a presentation meant prior to instruction which, consequently, makes it difficult for them to give a presentation. What is surprising is that giving a presentation is one of the requirements in the PYP in Saudi Arabia and learners are expected to give them throughout the year, however, some EFL teachers appear not to let students give presentations. A further reason is lack of language competence or low confidence; this may be due to the lack of practising speaking skills. It can be concluded that some teachers in this context did not cover all the course requirements to accomplish this year (i.e. giving presentations) which, in turn, affects learners' confidence in using

the language in an oral presentation.

One participant from the inductive PPP group mentioned that she has not given presentations before and she did not have the basic skills. In contrast, respondents from the TBLT group found giving presentations to be an easy task and they explained how comfortable they were with giving them. All the respondents in this group had given group presentations before and were therefore familiar with this task.

It can be seen that the learners from both the inductive PPP and deductive PPP group found some difficulty in preparing and giving presentations and gave a number of reasons why. However, in spite of such difficulties and the fact that they had never given a presentation before, the learners' performance during the presentations (post-test) improved significantly in comparison to the pre-test, which indicated that teaching approaches helped them use the target DMs. It is surprising that the performance scores of the members of the TBLT group, who noted that they had given presentations before and claimed that they had no difficulties giving the presentation, increased only slightly in comparison to the pre-test scores. A possible explanation for the low scores post-test when compared to the pre-test in the TBLT group may be as a result of the implementation of the TBLT approach where learners focused on meaning prior to focusing on form. According to Carless (2009), TBLT is considered a complex approach when compared to PPP.

In brief, explicit teaching of DMs helped learners to use the target DMs effectively in their presentations and enhanced their presentation skills. This is evident from previous discussions which highlighted and discussed the findings and linked them to the relevant literature. All three groups held positive attitudes towards practising DMs which

influenced the test scores in terms of improving the mean scores from pre-test to post-test.

As far as the cognitive theory of language learning is involved, a number of students mentioned how explicit instruction affected their learning of the target DMs and this highlighted the cognitive involvement of the teaching approaches on their learning and acquisition, an example from the inductive PPP group highlighted how the inductive teaching approach helped her in the thinking processes from listening to discussing.

It is apparent that learners in all groups show an understanding and knowledge of the DMs they were taught as they were able to mention some examples and explain their usefulness and their use and function. This is evident in their feedback and replies to interview questions. On the basis of these findings, it can be argued that the participants in all groups showed a declarative knowledge of the target forms. Yamaoka (2005) claims that imitation, repetition and pattern practice are important for the evolving of declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge in an EFL context. This is apparent in the improvement in use of SDMs from pre-test to post-test. Consequently, learner development of declarative knowledge of the target forms can be linked to the explicit instruction of them. Moreover, procedural knowledge was obtained through the practice of the target forms.

Teaching DMs explicitly enables learners to practise and use target forms, as highlighted by learners' comments. For instance, some of the participants emphasised the fact that learning of DMs is difficult if they are not explicitly taught and that they become easier with practice; as one interviewee stated: "They are difficult to learn if nobody tells you about them and you do not know how to use them, but they get easier to use with practice"

(Deductive PPP interviewee 4, line 24). Consequently, learners' scores increased from the pre-test when they had had no instruction on the target DMs to the post-test after they have been taught the DMs. As a result, they developed their declarative knowledge and turned it into procedural knowledge. It is apparent that the findings from the interviews support those from the tests, as inductive PPP and deductive PPP mean scores in the immediate post-test were greater and significantly different when compared to the scores obtained by the TBLT group.

The literature on the effectiveness of explicit instruction on language skills supports the findings from the interviews with regard to spoken skills. However, the students also spoke about the use of the target forms in writing and not only in speaking. To illustrate this point, one participant said: *"It's a basic thing when you are writing paragraphs ... especially in writing you have to use such words"* (Inductive PPP interviewee 2, line 17). This implies that teachers should pay more attention to teaching these markers because they are so useful in both spoken and written discourse.

In brief, the findings in relation to the first research question and to both quantitative and qualitative findings can be summarised as follows:

1. Teaching DMs explicitly by using the three different teaching methods helped learners to learn and use the target DMs in post-test presentations (short-term learning).
2. Deductive and inductive PPP led to greater use of SDMs and these two groups outperformed the TBLT group.
3. The majority of interviewees in all treatment groups demonstrated positive attitudes towards learning and practising DMs which can be linked to the improvement of their scores from pre-test to post-test. These qualitative findings corroborate the quantitative findings from the tests.



### **7.3 Second Research Question: Which teaching approach, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive), or TBLT has a long-term effect on the acquisition of structural discourse markers?**

This question was answered on the basis of the quantitative data analysis only. It sought to find out which of the three teaching methods have a greater impact upon acquisition and why. For this purpose, a second Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the gain scores of three independent groups as explained in Chapter 4.

The gain scores were calculated and compared over time. In order to establish the effect of treatment upon acquisition of the target DMs, gain scores pertaining to the pre-test, the first delayed test and the second delayed test were calculated and compared. It is apparent that all three groups made gains in the post-test, first delayed and second delayed tests in comparison to the pre-test, prior to the instruction of the target DMs. The test results showed that members of the TBLT group made pre-test to post-test gains of 1.93, pre-test to first delayed test gains of .31 and pre-test to second delayed test gains of 1.75. Members of the deductive PPP group made pre-test to post-test gains of 12.37, pre-test to first delayed test gains of 2.25 and pre-test to second delayed test gains of 1.37. Members of the inductive PPP group, made pre-test to post-test gains of 9.52, pre-test to first delayed test gains of 5.05 and pre-test to second delayed test gains of 2.35.

To conclude, the gain scores data demonstrates that all groups made gains in the production of DMs in their presentations. The pre-test to post-test gains were larger in the deductive and inductive PPP groups but smaller in the TBLT group. It can be said that members of the deductive and inductive PPP group performed similarly and both outperformed the TBLT group.

The findings from the post-test to first delayed test gain scores showed that none of the groups had made any gains. However, for the TBLT group the scores did not drop significantly in comparison to the other two groups. The gain scores for the post-test to the second delayed test increased for the TBLT group and decreased for the other two groups.

This is not a surprising result as Schmitt (2010) points out: “one of the most reliable findings in vocabulary studies is that scores on immediate post-tests almost inevitably drop when later measured on a delayed post-test” (p.155). A possible explanation for the drop in scores may be due to the fact that learners did not practise oral presentation and did not use the SDMs after the input session.

The effect of treatments upon acquisition of the target DMs were illustrated from the pre-test to first and second delayed post-test gain scores, which were calculated according to Schmitt’s (2010) suggestion:

The first delayed test scores – the pre-test scores = acquisition gains

The second delayed test scores – the pre-test scores = acquisition gains

The pre-test to first delayed test gain scores improved in all groups. In addition, statistically significant differences were found between all groups in favour of inductive PPP with a highest gain score. It can be suggested that all teaching methods had an impact on learners’ acquisition of the target DMs. However, the inductive PPP approach aided the acquisition of DMs and seems to work better in this context as the gain scores were shown to be significantly higher than TBLT and deductive PPP. Although, the inductive PPP approach aided the acquisition of DMs in the first delayed test, it cannot be claimed to be the sole reason for learners’ acquisition of DMs. There may be other possible

reasons besides the inductive PPP approach influencing learners' learning and acquisition.

With regard to the pre-test to second delayed post-test gain scores, it is clear that all groups improved and made gains in the production of DMs in the second delayed test when compared to the pre-test. However, there were no statistically significant differences between groups as their gain scores were convergent.

Based on the findings of the gain scores, it can be argued that all three treatment groups made gains as the gain scores in all tests and for all groups were higher than the initial pre-test scores, which indicates that all treatments had an impact on the learning (pre-test to post-test) and the acquisition of SDMs (pre-test to first delayed test and second delayed test).

In brief, it is clear that the TBLT group maintained its level of performance and sustained it over time without making a large drop in the mean or gain scores while both the deductive and inductive PPP group made a large improvement in the post-test mean scores and declined from post-test to delayed tests. There are, however, a number of possible explanations for the TBLT performance; first, the TBLT group used a number of DMs in their pre-test presentation which indicated that they were aware of using SDMs in oral presentation prior to instruction. Second, interviewees from the TBLT group confirmed that they had done group presentations before.

It can be summarised that all treatment groups gained scores in the first delayed-test when compared to pre-test which is evident of the effect of all treatments on acquisition. However, inductive PPP seems to be more effective in terms of teaching DMs in this

context than TBLT and deductive PPP. The pre-test to first delayed test gain scores prove the effect of treatment upon acquisition of DMs, of the inductive PPP group were significantly different and indicates that this group outperformed the TBLT and deductive PPP groups. However, pre-test to second delayed test gain scores for all groups were convergent.

The findings of the pilot study revealed that teaching DMs by using TBLT and PPP improved the use of the target SDMs equally in the post-test. However, the TBLT group outperformed the PPP group in the gain scores in the delayed test, which indicates that TBLT was a more successful approach than PPP in the long-term. The findings of the pilot study contradicted the findings of the main study in one way as, in the main, the inductive PPP group outperformed the TBLT and deductive PPP groups from the pre-test to the first delayed test. However, the main study findings also supported the findings of the pilot study in that indirect explicit instruction (TBLT and inductive PPP) seemed to work more effectively than direct explicit instruction (deductive PPP) in the Saudi EFL context in the long-term. Therefore, these teaching approaches clearly had more impact on learning DMs. In addition, deductive and inductive PPP groups gained higher scores in the post-test (presentation). This result may be explained by the fact that deductive and inductive PPP approaches seem to be more suitable in this context, at least in the short-term.

In brief, it can be argued that the long-term effect of teaching DMs was captured in the inductive PPP group. It is also interesting to note that the TBLT group improved slightly from pre-test to post-test and they made small gains in the first delayed test when compared to the pre-test although these gains are considered insignificant when compared to other groups.

It is also interesting to note that all treatments aided the learning of DMs as well as their acquisition, as all groups scores improved in the first delayed test in comparison to the pre-test. It can be concluded that, in terms of the acquisition and gains of DMs, all treatment groups had a positive impact on learners' acquisition of DMs. However, the inductive PPP approach seems to aid the acquisition of SDMs and had better results from the pre-test to the first delayed test in this specific context.

It can also be said that the positive impact of both deductive and inductive PPP approaches on learners' learning in the short-term might be as a result of learners having experienced similar methods in terms of the presentation stage within the PPP approach. It can be argued that both PPP approaches proved their effectiveness in this context on learning DMs, which contradicted the claims made by Skehan, (1998); Ellis, (2003); and Willis & Willis, (2009), that learning through the PPP approach may end in failure. As argued in Chapter 2, the suitability of the PPP approach depends to a great extent on the context; the current study proving the suitability of both inductive and deductive PPP at least in the Saudi EFL context, as implementing both showed a positive impact on short-term learning of DMs. These results are likely to be related to the clear sequences of the PPP approach for both teachers and learners. In addition, learners experienced a similar method in terms of teacher control of the class as Littlewood (2007) noted "PPP sequence (presentation, practice, production) represents not only a way of 'delivering' the language specified in the syllabus but also a way of controlling the interaction in class" (p. 244). In line with that, the findings supported Dekeyser's (1998) and Carless' (2009) claims that dismissing the PPP approach from EFL classes seems premature.

With regard to the effect of treatment upon acquisition, the inductive PPP approach had a greater impact on learners' acquisition of the target DMs than TBLT and deductive PPP

which is evident from the significance results when compared to TBLT and deductive PPP. It seems possible that the effectiveness of inductive PPP is due to indirect instruction of this approach.

It is also important to note how the three explicit teaching methods are influenced by the theories of L2 learning and acquisition. These theories are discussed in relation to the findings. It is important to consider Krashen's comprehension hypothesis (2003) as the pre-test to first-delayed test gain scores in the learners' production of DMs in their presentations were consistent with the hypothesis which focuses on the impact of input of DMs on learners' gains/acquisition of DMs. Krashen's comprehension hypothesis is concerned with acquisition, which is a subconscious process, rather than learning, which is a conscious process. Krashen's (2013) comprehension hypothesis is that "we acquire language when we understand messages that contain aspects of language (vocabulary and grammar)" (p.3). In addition, Krashen (1981) believes that "acquisition occurs when language is used for what it was designed for, communication" (1982, p.1), therefore, active communication plays a vital role in second language and acquisition. The findings in this study support Krashen's comprehension hypothesis as all teaching methods led to the acquisition of the target DMs when compared to the pre-test results and the learners participating in this study used the language for communication where the practice in all methods used was within the CLT approach. However, the inductive PPP gain scores were significantly different when compared to both the TBLT and deductive PPP groups; thus, the acquisition of DMs was more effective using the inductive PPP approach.

In brief, Krashen's argument supports the findings of the main study as all groups showed an increased production of the target DMs in the post-tests. This implies that learning and acquisition had occurred as a result of explicit instruction of the target SDMs. It can also

be said that the production of the target DMs in the post-test aided learning and acquisition of the target DMs in the delayed tests in all groups but there were differences between groups in learning and acquisition.

The findings also support the cognitive theory of language learning and the positive effect of explicit instruction on cognitive involvement. According to N. Ellis (2005) there is a correlation between effective explicit learning and the depth and the elaboration of the cognitive processes. Learners in the PPP group attempted to learn the language (inductively and deductively) in the (presentation/cognitive stage) which involved a number of thinking and cognitive processes in order to acquire the declarative knowledge. In the TBLT group, learners were also involved in different cognitive processes in order to accomplish the task which is in accord with Prabhu (1987) who argued that in doing tasks learners “arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought” (p. 24)

Moreover, the findings regarding the effect of treatment upon acquisition (delayed-tests) show that there were significant differences among the groups in that the inductive PPP group performed better than the other two groups in the first delayed test, whereas all groups were convergent in the second delayed test.

Practising and transferring the input into output, whether spontaneously (e.g. immediate activities) or with preparation (e.g. giving presentations), helped enable learners to make use of this input in the future (acquisition of DMs). Statistically, the deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups performed better than the TBLT group and significantly differently in the post-tests. In addition, the inductive PPP group performed better than the two other groups and significantly different in the first delayed test. Producing the target DMs

(output) depends on the teaching approach to a great extent, as in TBLT the main focus was on meaning and completing the task and learners were left to elicit the target forms in the final stage (post-task) whereas, in deductive and inductive PPP, learners were introduced to the target forms in the presentation stage before practicing and producing the DMs in oral presentations. It can be said that both stages (practice and production) within the PPP approach are considered as scaffolding for the output of the target DMs in the form of oral presentation.

**7.4 Third Research Question: To what extent do Saudi EFL learners consider learning structural discourse markers via TBLT, deductive PPP, or inductive PPP more useful than traditional teaching methods?**

This third research question was answered on the basis of the qualitative data analysis only and sought to find out the usefulness of the teaching method which was elicited from learners' responses to the interview questions as well as from the answers given in the exit slips (anonymously) to a sole direct question about whether they felt that the teaching method was useful.

Apart from the main purpose of this question, it also sought to gain further insight into ELT and practices in the EFL context by asking learners about the similarities and differences between the experimental teaching method and their normal/ everyday teaching method. To answer the third research question, it was necessary to analyse students' scripts in depth and define what "useful instruction" meant in terms of the learners' beliefs and perspectives on the teaching method. Useful instruction was also defined in terms of the extent to which the teaching resulted in learning/acquisition of DMs based on learners' scores on each test (see Sections 7.2 and 7.3). The learners' responses were divided according to the three different teaching approaches. Students'



beliefs regarding classroom practices and the teaching method and their responses on the differences between the experimental teaching method and the teaching method implemented by their teachers are highlighted.

The following sections discuss: the learners' positive/negative attitudes to the experimental teaching method based on the interview data; the learners' awareness of the teaching method; the similarities and differences between the teaching method introduced by the researcher and the method implemented by the teachers; and fourth, the learners' attitudes towards group work.

With regard to the TBLT approach, some interviewees demonstrated a positive attitude, explaining how this approach helped them to work freely and stay within their comfort zone. A participant commented: *"because you made us express things in our own thoughts, in our comfort zones, so we wrote it and everything"* (TBLT interviewee 1, line 52). The learner's comment showed the process of thinking while doing tasks. However, this finding is contrary to previous studies which found that learners are uncomfortable with the freedom in the TBLT approach (Burrows, 2008; Carless, 2004; Lopes, 2004). Another participant explained how this method may have a long-term effect and aid retention as it helped students to learn from their mistakes: *"But maybe your method is long lasting because it helps us learn from our mistakes"* (TBLT interviewee 3, line 47). The learners' comments about TBLT are in line with Willis's (2007) statement that engaging learners in the real use of the language is the most beneficial way to teach language and has a positive impact on language learning as learners are free to use the language. This is evident in the learners' comments on how TBLT helped them to work independently and learn from one another. In addition, in support of the use of TBLT in this context, Willis (1996) emphasises the importance of setting tasks in promoting

learning through interaction: “Tasks provide opportunities for learners to listen to and participate in meaning-focused interactions from the very beginning, helping them to acquire the new language more naturally” (p. 118).

However, a participant indicated a negative attitude towards the TBLT approach and believes that it is a difficult approach and may affect learners’ learning: *“I think still, like, the other students are... maybe... the average students would not learn honestly. I think they would find it difficult, that’s all”* (TBLT, interviewee 1, line 75). The participant explained further when asked about the reason and she said, *“because they depend on the teacher to give and explain everything”* (TBLT, interviewee 1, line 79). It could be argued that this negative attitude was due to dependence on the teacher in traditional language classes.

All the interviewees from the deductive PPP group indicated that they had a positive attitude towards the teaching method. In support of the deductive PPP method in terms of focusing on speaking (presentation skills), one participant said: *“If we continue learning by this method that would be better for our English. I have watched a video and heard that if you want to learn English language do not memorise the vocabulary but listen. I mean listen and speak”* (Deductive PPP interviewee 3, line 48). This participant believed that both listening and speaking are important tools to learn the language rather than memorising the words. Another participant introduced one aspect of using the deductive PPP within the CLT (group work) and noted how this approach helped the students to use the target words and work with other students: *“It helped us to function these words more and to get more information from girls and put them in different sentences”* (Deductive PPP interviewee 3, line 52). This student highlighted both using the target DMs and cooperating with others as these incorporate two important features

of adopting CLT, namely, group work and producing the target language. In the following extract, another participant speaks about how interesting this method, unlike the everyday method which she described as “boring”, and commented on the implemented teaching approach: *“I did enjoy it and the class was presented in a good spirit instead of the boring lesson and the explanation on the board”* (Deductive PPP interviewee 4, line 49). In fact, most of the learners talked about the practice and the production stages of deductive PPP and about some of its aspects, such as group work and learning presentation skills and applying the target SDMs. With regard to deductive PPP, their positive attitudes towards this approach are related to a number of aspects, such as group work, presentation skills and using the target words. Interviewees made a number of positive comments regarding some aspects of the teaching method including the group work (discussed later in this section) and the usefulness of giving presentations (discussed earlier in Section 7.2).

Interviewees from the inductive PPP group also showed a positive attitude towards the method. To illustrate, a participant depicted how this teaching method helped her to think and work in groups, which is evident of the impact of the inductive approach on cognitive processing, *“it let me think. I mean, I listened first and, after that, I discussed and found ideas, then listened and added ideas. After that I wrote and integrated my ideas with the group’s ideas”* (Inductive PPP interviewee 1, line 51). Another participant mentioned the impact of practising the language on the development of her English language skills, saying: *“I feel it improves my skills”* (Inductive PPP, Interviewee 2, line 52). She emphasised this and pointed out that: *“We did not practise English with each other”* (Inductive PPP interviewee 2, line 54) as there is a lack of opportunity to practise English speaking and writing skills in their classes.

In brief, all three treatment group members showed a positive attitude towards some aspects of the experimental teaching methods and emphasised the usefulness of group work and the practice and production stages. For example, interviewee 1 from the TBLT group explained her liking of the method, insisting that the group work helped the students work on the presentations without restriction.

From a cognitive perspective, learners from all groups showed awareness of the importance of cognitive processes in all teaching methods. Interviewees noted that cognitive involvement is important in terms of the positive influence on their learning, for example, an interviewee mentioned how explicit/inductive PPP promoted her learning as it is encouraged her to think and share ideas with others. Another explained how useful it was to get involved in cognitive activities, such as listening and speaking, within the deductive PPP. Cognitive involvement within different types of explicit instruction plays an important role in promoting learners' learning and acquisition. Doughty (2001), for example, claimed that "progress in SLA is thought often to depend crucially upon cognitive processes such as paying attention to features of target input" (p. 206) and noted that progress in adult SLA depends on cognitive processes such as differences between input and output.

The participants' responses when asked if they had noticed that lessons had some kind of organisation, are presented in Chapter 6. The aim was to find out whether the learners preferred the traditional or experimental methods. It is worth noting that some participants showed an awareness of the experimental teaching method used. Some interviewees attempted to describe the procedures involved in the lesson, with some being able to explain it properly, and others having some doubts about it. The interviewees from the deductive PPP group explained the three stages that are incorporated in the PPP lesson

and declared that the lesson started with an explanation by the teacher and then practice of the target words. The interviewees from the inductive PPP group highlighted the receptive task which is the listening exercise that preceded the production of the presentation. The interviewees from the TBLT group also highlighted the benefit of producing the language before being exposed to the target language.

Some interviewees expressed that they did not realise any kind of organization in the lessons. In order to gain a better insight into the teaching methods used in this context, participants were asked about the similarities and differences between the experimental method used by the researcher and the method used by their teacher.

The findings revealed that the participants were aware of the implemented teaching approaches and were able to identify the differences between their everyday teaching method and the experimental method. The participants from the TBLT group described the method implemented by their teachers as adhering to the coursebook method with no presentation skills being taught, with a focus on studying grammar and vocabulary and where the teacher introduces the main idea and the students do exercises. One participant described it as the *“old method”*. On the other hand, they described the experimental method (TBLT) in several ways: as the one where the teacher gives out the topic and the learners give presentations; where the language skills are applied first and the main ideas are identified later; where the focus is on presentation; where students depend on themselves (learner centred) and the lesson is not based on a coursebook; where the focus is on new words that have not been used before, where students practise the language: they make up their own sentences, talk about their experiences and use the words in precise positions.

Participants from the deductive PPP group also demonstrated awareness of the experimental method and all participants explained the differences between the teaching approach implemented by the researcher and their normal classes. However, two interviewees said that the deductive PPP teaching approach is similar to the everyday teaching method except that: in their classes, teachers explain more and give more examples and in the researcher's class, the focus is on presentation skills. The other two interviewees added that their teachers tended to base the lesson on the coursebook, teach vocabulary and grammar and not include group work or discussion; and require the students to do exercises based on rules from the coursebook.

It is notable, from the learners' description, that the normal teaching method is different to the experimental method, despite the comments of the two interviewees who said it is similar. It may be because the teacher in both the researcher's class and normal class explains the lesson in the (presentation stage) and then gives students an exercise to complete. In general, it seems that English classes in the Saudi EFL context are teacher-centred and the students are not involved in either group discussion or group work.

The interviewees from the inductive PPP group also described their normal teaching as being based on a coursebook, with no application of what they have studied; however, they are required to do exercises in groups and give individual answers. One participant likened it to the old teaching method used in schools. The participants described the selected method in the research study as one that gives them a rule and asks them to apply it using their own sentences; encourages self-learning with the teacher as a guide; introduces a variety of topics; and provides a model for presentation (See table 37 in Chapter 6 for a full list of similarities and differences between the teachers' approaches and the experimental methods).

In brief, it is apparent that there are similarities and differences between the teaching methods used in the research class and the normal classes. The TBLT group acknowledged that the selected method was totally different from their usual one based on a coursebook, learning grammar and vocabulary. Two of the deductive PPP group members declared that they had been taught using the same approach whereas two said it was different. The inductive PPP group reported that their normal teaching method was based on coursebooks and similar to the 'old method' of teaching, and was totally different from the experimental one.

Based on learners' responses, it can be claimed that the teaching methods used in the Saudi EFL context are still heavily based on the traditional teaching methods, such as the audio-lingual and GTM. The learners claim that in their usual classes, there is no practice or application of what they have studied and no speaking practice or practice of presentation skills. With exception of TBLT group who said they had given presentations before.

As previously mentioned, all the teaching methods in this research were based on the CLT approach that encompasses self-learning, group work, talking freely and fluently and discussion in groups, among other features which are evident from the learners' descriptions. However, two participants who experienced the inductive teaching approaches (TBLT and Inductive PPP) have their own preferences for being given the rule first and applying it second. The first interviewee explained her preference and said: *"I like when the person tells me what I am supposed to do and then I apply it"* (TBLT interviewee 3, line 45) and the other interviewee expressed a similar view and commented that in the inductive PPP approach: *"there is a lack of the teacher's role, maybe because we get used to the school and that the teacher gives us everything"* (Inductive PPP

interviewee 4, line 10). They preferred deductive and teacher-centred methods since that is the approach with which they are more familiar. These results match those observed in earlier studies such as Shehadeh (2012) who noted that EFL learners showed preferences towards traditional methods and teacher-centred classes. It is also important to note that learners in the EFL context get used to traditional methods where teachers play an important role in English classes and learners are used to doing activities individually or in pairs. Learners' responses supported the argument on the Saudi EFL context made in the literature, that is, that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia tend to follow traditional methods (Shah et al., 2013). These methods have been labelled by Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) and Shehdeh (2010) as insufficient since they are teacher-centred. Khan (2011) argued that teachers in Saudi Arabia apply "the traditional grammar and translation method as it seems easier for them as well as the students. And, finally the target language suffers" (p. 119). The researcher agrees with Khan (2011) that the GTM is easier for both teachers and learners, but the most important factor in this process is the learners not the teachers. In addition, Al-Seghayer claimed that "traditional teaching methods fail to produce learners who are able to take part or engage in a basic conversation or comprehend a simple oral command or written message" (2014, p. 22). I believe that traditional teaching methods fail to improve Saudi EFL learners' productive skills (speaking and writing). In addition, the current study found that there are other ways to teach English which seem to be more effective with regard to language learning than traditional teaching methods.

Moreover, all participants from the three treatment groups pointed out that their classes are based on coursebooks. In fact, many EFL teachers are constrained by timetables and so resort to teaching from coursebooks. The time limitations may also mean they do not have time to let students practise the language since they also need to test them on the contents of the coursebook(s). It is quite challenging for teachers who have to stick to



institutional regulations and comply with the rules. Teachers need to stick to the coursebook to fulfil the course objectives and cover all the material the students need to know by the date of the exam. In line with the findings of this study, Al-Seghayer (2014) pointed out that an EFL teacher in Saudi Arabia are “viewed as a material presenter and content demonstrator, not as a manager of language learning situations” (p. 20). In sum, it can be suggested that teachers in this context could be facilitators of the language rather than presenters by helping learners to learn, practise and use the language within the classroom. One of the options for EFL teachers to be facilitators of language learning is to introduce collaborative learning tasks and group work.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that adopting communicative teaching approaches, such as PPP and TBLT, seem to have a positive impact on learning in this context. It can be argued that there is a need to move from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach in university settings in Saudi Arabia. It can also be argued that supplementary materials, which teach different skills such as giving oral presentations, are important in terms of enhancing learners’ interests and motivation to learn based on their needs. Supplementary materials should be integrated into the materials in order to foster learners’ motivation to learn and develop their language skills based on their needs.

The third sub-theme, the usefulness of group work, emerged from the interviews. Lashri et al (2013) pointed out that students’ participation is considered as part of the learning process; participation refers to a learner’s cognitive involvement, emotional engagement and active participation. Furthermore, many of the students emphasised the importance of group work. Within the CLT approach that encompasses all three experimental methods, group work is considered an essential tool. Group work, a type of cooperative learning, provides learners with tasks to be accomplished in groups which may result in

both negotiation of meaning as well as greater use of output (Long & Porter, 1985). A minority of students in this study, however, prefer individual work because they have experienced a lack of cooperation from other students. Overall, however, learners confirmed that working in groups has a number of advantages as it enables different ideas to emerge, facilitates getting to know the other people in the class, encourages learning new words from one another and correcting one another's mistakes, and fosters co-operation. Examples from each group will be illustrated in the following paragraph.

An interviewee from the deductive PPP group pointed out that group work enables different ideas to emerge which leads to good presentations "*because each student brings an idea and as a result our presentation will be good*" (Deductive PPP interviewee 2, line 51). Other students emphasised that group work helped them to get to know other people in the class: "*the best thing: working with groups, I get to know the girls in my group ... before that I did not know them*" (Deductive PPP interviewee 4, line 8). Group work gave this student the opportunity to get to know her classmates and it can be said that it may help create a friendly environment in class. Sharan (1990) points out that cooperative learning enhances positive classmates' relations. It can be claimed that creating a friendly environment in the classroom may be beneficial in terms of enhancing learners' motivation to learn and engage actively in the classroom.

One participant pointed out another advantage, which is that group work is useful in correcting mistakes: "*in groups we can correct one another's mistakes*" (TBLT interviewee 4, line 30). Hence, group work is useful in fostering co-operation with others: "*I felt the group work is better than the individual work ... the cooperation makes us stronger*" (TBLT interviewee 4, line 40)

In general group work may foster learning and contribute to long-term retention. A participant commented: *“we talk with the other girls and gather ideas and find words together. I mean if there is a word that we do not know, the members of the group search for it until we know its meaning. If someone comments on a word, I feel I won’t forget it again. I feel when we use the words, they stay longer in my mind”* (Inductive PPP interviewee 2, line 54).

Other interviewees had some other comments to add about working in groups. For example, one participant commented: *“it depends on the group you are with, if the group is interested in that thing you will benefit, if not you have to work by yourself”* (Inductive PPP interviewee 1, line 41). Learners’ motivation is another important reason highlighted by this student as it plays an important role in group work.

To summarise, the learners were all requested to work in groups (i.e. to prepare and give group presentations) in all three treatment groups. SLA focuses on communicative competence in order to use the language effectively. Furthermore, group work is considered an essential tool to promote language learning and maximise interaction between learners. It can be argued that group work provides students with ample opportunities to engage in activities and produce the language. From the interviewees’ responses, it is clear that group work is useful as learners identified a number of advantages to using it. This is in line with Long and Porter’s (1985) argument that group work increases learners’ opportunities to practise the language and consequently improves learners’ speaking skills.

As mentioned earlier, the acquisition of DMs was not significant in either the TBLT or the deductive PPP group. Krashen (2003) argues that there are some factors, such as low

self-esteem and anxiety that may hinder the acquisition of comprehensible input. It must also be emphasised that pushing learners to produce the language and speak may affect their performance as it may raise their affective filters (Krashen, 1988), such as anxiety and attitude, which may hinder the learning/acquisition of a language. Some interviewees mentioned a number of such issues related to the task of giving presentations as well as to learning DMs, in the exit slips rather than giving their opinions of the teaching approach. To illustrate, with regard to presentations, a participant from the TBLT group wrote that giving presentations is not essential. Another from the deductive PPP group explained the difficulty of preparing presentations. In relation to learning DMs, a participant from the TBLT group believed that they had not learned new things and they had just repeated DMs they already knew. Furthermore, some learners, for instance, refused to have their voices recorded and, for ethical reasons, were not pushed to participate in the presentation itself but participated in preparing and rehearsing the presentation with their groups. To conclude, it is difficult to explain this result, but these factors may have affected learners' performance in the delayed test and, accordingly, may have influenced their acquisition of the target DMs to some extent.

In order to enrich understanding of the most effective way to teach in the EFL context, written feedback or exit slips were used as mentioned in Chapter 4 (the methodology chapter). The exit slips required the students to provide feedback on their perception regarding one of the three implemented teaching approaches and whether they found it useful and why (see Tables 38 and 39 in Chapter 6 for the number of responses from exit slips and summary of learners' reasons for their responses respectively). Students in the three treatment groups provided different reasons why they consider the teaching approach to be useful or not useful. A few students did not provide any reasons. Students'

responses from the three groups are discussed in the following paragraphs. Examples from each group will be given.

The participants showed different understandings of the implemented teaching approach. Some of them highlighted aspects of the teaching method, i.e. group work, while others highlighted the learning of DMs. The results demonstrated that the majority of learners, 10 students out of 16 in the TBLT group, declared that it was useful and provided a number of reasons to support their choice: it helps prepare them for the next academic level; it helps improve their English skills including presentation and writing skills; it allows them to practise what they learned and use the DMs they were taught (*“Improved our English language writing and presentation skills in a short time, which is a good thing”*); it helped them remember the taught words for a long time (*“Yes, because we practised and applied what we learned which will last for long time and in every lesson we built new information based on previous lessons”*); and, it is *“useful in helping us to learn how to use different words for sequencing and giving examples. The topics were good and interesting”*. Four students from the TBLT group emphasised the usefulness of practice presentation within this approach: *“because it helps students to practise presentations, which helps them in organizing their ideas”*. Another student said that TBLT helped learners to prepare their presentation in class: *“It was okay compared to students that prepare their presentations at home”*. It can be seen that students in general believe that TBLT is useful and were able to identify a number of reasons. Most of the responses focused on how TBLT promoted their presentation skills, learning DMs, using DMs for different functions, practising presentations. In addition, one student mentioned the advantage of preparing the presentation in class rather than at home.

However, a few students (five) declared that they do not find the TBLT approach useful. Most of the reasons given (four responses) were based on the students' belief that it did not help them learn new things: *"It is not useful because we did not learn new things it was just did a group presentation and we did that before."* Another student said, *"I did not learn new things, it was like revision"*. Another reason given is that presentation skills are not essential: *"It is not important to give presentations in English. We tried hard to write presentation but they were really difficult for us"*. Finally, TBLT was deemed as not being useful for high-level students: *"I think it is very beneficial to beginners to learn the basics and follow the pattern, although I think these basic lessons should not be taught to high-level students"*. It should be noted here that most of the negative response was not related to the TBLT approach but to the DMs themselves, as learners declared they had not learnt new things. The TBLT approach is in fact designed for high-level students; the student who commented on the fact that it is not was referring to the target DMs rather than the TBLT approach itself. It is apparent that the majority of learners' negative attitudes towards the TBLT approach are based on the fact that they did not learn new vocabulary rather than on the lack of use and opportunity to practise the language. Learners in this context expect to learn new vocabulary in each lesson as is evident from their responses. They expect the teacher to spoon feed the language and demonstrate it, which is as a result of adopting traditional teaching methods as discussed earlier. However, the positive attitudes emphasised practising presentation skills as being a really useful feature of this approach.

Nine students out of fourteen from the deductive PPP group who filled out the exit slips felt that the teaching method was useful and provided reasons why. For example, three students because they had learned new words (DMs); one of these students linked the learning of the words to using them in the presentation: *"We learned new words and*

*applied them to our presentation, which was really useful*". Another reason why the students found the deductive PPP method to be useful is because it helped them learn how to prepare, organise and give presentations using the target words which encourage them to be involved in different cognitive processes that affect their learning: *"We learned how to give presentations and how to prepare and organise our presentation by using DMs"*. Two learners agreed that the deductive PPP approach helped them to learn writing for presentations: *"It was useful because it helped us to write sentences and it gave us information on how to organise our talk"*. Moreover, one student considered it to be useful as it provided good practice for the next academic level: *"It was good practice and experience for the following academic years"*. In addition, it helped them to overcome the fear of speaking in front of people.

Five students believed that it was not useful. One said: *"It was boring and not interesting"* - this attitude might be related to her motivation; another said, *"It is difficult to prepare a presentation"* – this might be related to the fact that learners in this group had not given presentations before; and three of these students did not provide any reasons. Despite these views, overall, it seems that the majority of students showed positive attitudes towards the three stages of the deductive PPP approach: learning the new words (presentation stage), practising them (practice stage) and finally applying them to presentations (production stage).

Students' responses regarding the usefulness of inductive PPP approach can be summarised in three points. First, it is effective as it gives them the opportunity to work in groups and exchange ideas and experiences. Second, it also helped them to improve different language skills, for instance, speaking and writing for presentations. Lastly, the

inductive PPP method also aided them to learn as well as use the taught DMs in both writing and presentation.

Twelve out of sixteen students in the inductive PPP group declared that they found the teaching method to be useful. The majority of students (five students) considered inductive PPP useful because of the group work, thinking and cognitive processes: *“It is a good method because all students were engaged in the lessons and in preparing and giving presentations”*; *“It helps me with brainstorming and finding out ideas with the group members”* and *“A useful and enjoyable method as it gave me the opportunity to know my group members and exchange ideas and experiences”*. It is evident that students believed that group work made the inductive PPP method useful as it helped them actively engage with their group to prepare a presentation by looking for ideas and exchanging opinions. Consequently, group work enhanced the relationships between group members. The findings from learners’ comments in exit slips supported the findings from interviews in relation to the usefulness of group work as all inductive PPP interviewees mentioned the usefulness of working in groups. Another reason given was that it helped them to improve their language skills. Specifically, it *“improved my speaking”*, helped the student to *“speak fluently”* and *“give presentations”*. Other students thought that it is useful because it helped them to learn as well as use the DMs: *“improving my language by learning the new words”*, *“because it enables the student to use new words and use them in writing and in giving presentations”*. Finally, one student said that the inductive PPP *“is a new way of learning, we learned how to prepare a presentation”*.

The remaining four students believe that inductive PPP is not a useful method. Only two students provided reasons for their answers, namely that it is a *“waste of time”* and that it is a *“boring method but at the same time a unique experience, but I did not like it”*. A



possible explanation of learners' negative attitudes might be related to their motivation and the effect of the perceived lack of relevance of inductive PPP to examinations.

In the following paragraphs, learners' attitudes to the three teaching methods as reflected in their responses in the exit slips (qualitative) will be linked to the findings from the interviews (qualitative) and to their test scores (quantitative) in order to find out the best way to teach.

In fact, the majority of responses by the students in all three treatment groups showed positive attitudes towards the implemented approaches - that they are useful and helped them in many respects. It can be seen that there is a correlation between learners' scores in the post-test and their attitudes towards the taught DMs, as well as teaching approaches. In brief, all teaching approaches helped learners to learn, use the target SDMs, and participate in different thinking processes. This influenced the post-test scores which improved from the pre-test. The deductive and inductive PPP groups both outperformed the TBLT group.

In addition, it is apparent from the learners' responses in the exit slips that they found each teaching method to be useful for a variety of reasons. For instance, two responses, one from the TBLT group and the other from the deductive PPP group agreed that the teaching method was useful in preparing them for the next academic level as they believe that it helped them to improve their presentation skills. This is supported by Meloni and Thompson's (1980) argument that "oral reports prepare the students in a realistic way to take part successfully in their regular academic classes in which they will be required to give oral presentations, participate in discussion and seminars, and take notes on lectures and discussions" (p. 504).

All three groups mentioned how the teaching method improved writing and speaking skills for giving presentations. However, the inductive PPP group showed more interest in that approach and mentioned a number of different reasons why they found group work to be effective in improving their writing, speaking and presentation skills, and learning and using the target DMs. Moreover, the majority of their responses mentioned that the teaching method was useful as it was based on group work. Moreover, many students from the TBLT group emphasised practising as one of the reasons for the usefulness of the TBLT approach.

It is worth noting that the findings from the exit slips supported the quantitative findings as well as the qualitative findings in favour of the inductive PPP approach. Thus, the inductive PPP approach appears to have a positive impact on learners' learning and acquisition of the target DMs in the Saudi EFL context. Learners' mean and gain scores in this group were better than in the other groups. Consequently, there is a correlation between both sets of data as the quantitative findings corroborate learners' positive attitudes to the experimental approach (Inductive PPP) as reported in their interviews, as well as the anonymous answers to exit slips.

The study has shown that all three teaching methods influenced language learning (DMs) positively in the short-term. Also, all the teaching methods affected the acquisition of DMs in the long-term but the inductive PPP gain scores were statistically significantly different from the scores of the other two groups.

Learners' negative attitudes towards the teaching approaches might be related to external factors: lack of experience practising presentations, the pressure of examinations, and attitudes towards learning English in general. Fareh (2010) noted that the negative attitude

of students towards English reduces their opportunities to communicate in English and to attain communicative competence.

The findings of this research provide insights into the importance of teaching SDMs explicitly, applying them in presentations and the effect of cognitive activities on learning and acquisition, as learners have emphasised the usefulness of learning and practising DMs. These findings enhance our understanding of teaching methods as they are implemented in the Saudi EFL context. In addition, this study has raised important questions about the nature of teaching EFL in this context and revealed that there is a heavy reliance on traditional teaching methods. It is evident from the learners' responses to the interview questions that communicative teaching methods are not currently implemented. The findings of the pilot study showed that the TBLT method was the best way; however, those the main study show that the best way of teaching is through inductive PPP. Thus, it can be said that indirect explicit teaching (TBLT and inductive PPP) is more effective in this context than the direct explicit teaching approach (deductive PPP) in the long-term, as the findings of both the pilot and the main study supported the indirect (inductive) teaching approach. Furthermore, introducing DMs to EFL learners has an impact on learners' uptake of the taught DMs in the short-term and the long-term.

### **7.5 Summary of the Main Findings (Quantitative and Qualitative)**

1. All treatment groups' scores increased from the pre-test to the post-test. However, deductive PPP and inductive PPP groups outperformed the TBLT group.
2. All treatment groups' scores increased and gained DMs from pre-test to first delayed test. However, inductive PPP outperformed both TBLT and deductive PPP, consequently it can be said that the inductive PPP approach had more effect

on learners' learning and acquisition of DMs as it seems to work better in this specific context.

3. Saudi EFL learners who participated in the interviews declared that learning as well as practising SDMs is useful and important, with one exception from the TBLT group.
4. Learners demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the taught SDMs by mentioning some examples, explaining their usefulness and their usage and function.
5. Participants mentioned that teaching SDMs assisted them in knowing how to use SDMs and in applying them to their presentation. Consequently, teaching DMs explicitly enables learners to practise target forms.
6. Learners identified a number of benefits for using SDMs in their presentations as it enables them to structure their speech and benefits them in terms of different aspects, such as linking between sentences, organising talk and using different DMs for the same functions.
7. The findings also revealed students held positive attitudes towards practising SDMs which helped them in using DMs effectively in oral presentations.
8. Some students highlighted how they found SDMs difficult at the beginning but practising made them easier to use.
9. Despite the fact that giving a presentation is a requirement in the Saudi EFL context, presentation skills are not taught by some EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

## **7.6 Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of the quantitative (test scores) and qualitative (interviews and exit slips) data in light of the research questions and relevant literature review findings. The replies to each question are based on the associated tests

(quantitative), interviews (qualitative), exit slips (qualitative), tests and interviews (quantitative and qualitative) or interviews and exit slips (qualitative). It also presented a summary of the main findings in Section 7.5. Chapter 8 will give the final conclusion of this thesis.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This thesis focuses on providing a full picture of the impact of different teaching approaches on learning and acquisition of SDMs. It also seeks to give insights on the effectiveness of learning and practising DMs and teaching approaches, based on both statistical measures and learners' perceptions. Therefore, this chapter first reviews the aims of this research, the methodology used and the main findings from both quantitative and qualitative data in section 8.2 before providing brief answers to research questions based on the findings from carrying out this research in section 8.3. Accordingly, the findings are triangulated quantitatively and qualitatively to determine if there is any correlation between both measures. The contributions of the thesis are highlighted in section 8.4. It also discusses the limitations of this study in section 8.5 and suggests some implications for future research in section 8.6.

### **8.2 Review of aims, methodology and main findings**

The aim of this study was to investigate the most appropriate ways to teach SDMs explicitly in the context of foundation year education in Saudi Arabia, either through TBLT or an inductive/deductive PPP approach. It focused on exploring Saudi EFL learners' use of the target DMs in oral production (presentations) after explicit instruction to aid them in acquiring certain aspects of language, and using them in their presentations, specifically in sequencing, opening and closing statements, giving examples, showing turning points in speech, and summarising. It also aimed to highlight learners' thoughts and experiences regarding the effectiveness of different teaching methods compared to traditional methods, and whether learning and practising DMs is important.

The research questions were:

**RQ1.** To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi English as a Foreign Language higher education context help students to learn and use them in their presentation?

**RQ2.** Which teaching approach, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive), or TBLT has a long-term effect on the acquisition of structural discourse markers?

**RQ3.** To what extent do Saudi EFL learners consider learning structural discourse markers via TBLT, deductive PPP, or inductive PPP more useful than traditional teaching methods?

The research questions were answered through experimental classroom research conducted on three groups studying at the foundation level at Taibah University for women. All groups were taught the same DMs, but through three different teaching approaches. Furthermore, a mixed methods approach was adopted. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. Quantitative data were collected from students' presentations in the pre-test, post-test, first delayed test and second delayed test. Qualitative data were based on both learners' interviews and answers to exit slips. The use of a mixed methods approach seems to have been effective as it enabled me to answer the research questions based on my philosophical stance discussed in 4.2.4. In addition, mixed methods enhanced my understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and enabled me to triangulate the findings from several sources of data in order to corroborate them.

The findings of this study revealed that explicit instruction of DMs via TBLT, deductive PPP and inductive PPP had a positive impact on learners' learning (in the short-term) and acquisition (in the long-term) of SDMs. However, the inductive PPP approach seems to work better with learners in this context. Moreover, the findings also showed that learners

held positive attitudes towards the implemented approaches in comparison to the traditional teaching methods implemented by their teachers. In brief, this study argued that teaching SDMs is of high importance, and that applying these talk units in giving presentations could lead to more structured and coherent presentations. It is worth noting that teaching different aspects of the spoken language (i.e. DMs) to target different language skills in this context is essential. Finally, one of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are still adopting traditional teaching methods and that presentation skills are not taught by some EFL teachers, despite them being a compulsory part of the foundation year assessment. In the next section, final answers to the research questions are provided.

### **8.3 Brief answers to research questions**

In this section, I attempted to provide final answers to the research questions as well as triangulate the findings by highlighting the correlation between students' opinions about the usefulness of learning and practising DMs, the usefulness of the type of instruction and their test results' scores (qualitative and quantitative data).

#### **Q1. To what extent does teaching structural discourse markers explicitly in the Saudi English as a Foreign Language higher education context help students to learn and use them in their presentation?**

Sub question: Do learners consider learning and practising structural discourse markers useful and why?

The answer to this question was gathered through post-tests and interviews. The effect of different treatments on learning DMs has been established. It can be seen that teaching DMs explicitly in the specific Saudi EFL context helped learners to use them in presentations. Learning and using DMs was measured through the frequency counts of



DMs as well as from learners' opinions on the usefulness of learning and practising them. In addition, there was a correlation between mean scores, which improved across all groups, in the immediate post-test and students' responses to interview questions. However, both deductive PPP and inductive PPP mean scores were larger than the TBLT group. In respect to the outcome of learners' interviews, interview data showed that explicit teaching of SDMs helped EFL learners (all treatment groups) to learn and use them in their presentation. In addition, participants from both PPP groups believed that learning and practising DMs are useful and important. Improved post-tests scores in both PPP groups may be as a result of learners holding a positive attitude towards learning DMs as shown in the interview responses. However, there were low mean scores for TBLT in comparison to the PPP groups as some learners held negative attitudes towards the usefulness of learning DMs.

The effect of explicit teaching of SDMs on learning was significant in terms of statistical differences in both PPP groups when compared to the TBLT group. Learners in all treatment groups gave a number of reasons for the usefulness of learning and practising DMs in their responses to the interview questions.

**Q2. Which teaching approach, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive), or TBLT has a long-term effect on the acquisition of structural discourse markers?**

Using the three different teaching approaches (treatments) had different impacts on the acquisition of DMs. The effect of treatments upon acquisition of SDMs was examined through the gain scores of DMs in the first delayed test when compared to the pre-test. It demonstrated the effect of multiple teaching approaches. All experimental groups made gains in the first delayed test when compared to the pre-tests. However, there was a significant difference in the gain scores between inductive PPP and TBLT, and between

deductive PPP and inductive PPP, in favour of inductive PPP. So, it can be argued that inductive PPP seems to be a more effective approach and aids the acquisition of DMs as the gain scores in this group improved more significantly than the other two groups. The inductive PPP results showed that this group benefitted more than the other groups as the effect of explicit teaching upon acquisition of DMs was statistically significant in this group only.

**Q3. To what extent do Saudi EFL learners consider learning structural discourse markers via TBLT, deductive PPP, or inductive PPP more useful than traditional teaching methods?**

Saudi EFL learners consider learning via the above methods more useful than learning via traditional methods. Furthermore, the findings from interviews supported those from the exit slips (written feedback). The results showed that learners were pleased with the teaching methods implemented by the researcher as they provided a number of advantages and highlighted the differences to their own teacher's method. In addition, they mentioned a number of disadvantages (from their point of view) for the method implemented by their own teachers.

The majority of learners from all groups declared that each teaching approach was useful for different reasons provided in exit slips. One significant concept that emerged from both interviewing and gathering prompts from all participants was that the inductive PPP group members held positive attitudes towards the teaching method which in effect resulted in increasing the mean and gain scores in their oral presentation test. Thus, the study has found that this seems to be the most effective way to teach DMs with learners in this context.

Having provided answers to the research questions, the next section outlines the contributions and limitations of the current study.

#### **8.4 Contributions of the thesis**

This research has contributed to the field of classroom research as well as teaching DMs in the EFL context by providing a description of the usefulness of explicit instruction by using different teaching methods on learners' learning and acquisition of SDMs. It also fills in the gaps by providing empirical research on the most effective method to teach SDMs to Saudi EFL learners, as most of the studies conducted within this context were descriptive and focused on the use and the frequency of DMs. It also showed the efficacy and the appropriateness of adopting an inductive teaching approach (i.e. TBLT and inductive PPP) in this particular context. In addition, adopting such communicative teaching approaches seems to have had a positive impact on learning in this context. In particular, explicit instruction of SDMs had a positive impact on learners' oral presentation as it helped them to organise and structure their speech.

This study provided evidence that authentic/supplementary materials should be integrated in the materials in order to foster learners' motivation to learn and develop their language skills based on their needs, as learners will have more freedom to talk about topics and at the same time practice presentation skills in more open and friendly classrooms. It also gave a full picture of teaching methods used by EFL teachers, based on learners' explanations of usual classroom practices, which showed that many Saudi EFL teachers still use traditional teaching methods.

## **8.5 Limitations of the study**

Like any other study, having some limitations is unavoidable. There are a number of limitations I faced, when carrying out the study.

1. The time of conducting this research was near the end of the academic year which I believe affected learners' learning and effective participation in the study as they were busy preparing and thinking about their final examination.
2. The sample size of participants (49 learners in all groups) is acceptable and sufficient as Dörnyei (2007) and Cohen et al. (2007) recommended. As indicated previously, this study is not an attempt to generalise the findings to the wider population as it was limited to a group of learners in the English Language Institute (Foundation program) at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. However, a large sample may help generalise the results to the wider population.
3. As previously mentioned, despite the fact that giving presentations is a requirement in the foundation year, all four interviewees from the deductive PPP group said that they had not done group presentations before. I could not confirm or challenge these reports as I did not use classroom observation in this study. However, lack of experience as they tried to accomplish the task of preparing and presenting the presentation may have distracted their attention from acquiring DMs and using them in their delayed test and therefore could have affected their scores.
4. Using a focus-group interview could provide more credible data about learners' opinions of the instruction of DMs and teaching approaches.
5. Group presentation was the only choice for conducting this research, individual presentation was not possible as it is time consuming and classroom time was limited and it was difficult to get hold of learners outside their timetable. In addition, some learners do not feel confident enough to talk in front of other people.
6. Learners were not available outside their timetable as they are studying English for

three days from 8.00 a.m. till 3.00 p.m. and were not willing to attend extra classes. They have one day allocated weekly for written examinations and the other day they are off so they can prepare for the exam. Getting hold of learners outside their classes was not possible at all due to examinations and long hours of language learning.

7. The period of one week between the first and second delayed tests was not sufficient to measure durable learning of DMs but as explained in the methodology chapter that was the only option as it was near the end of the academic year. A longer period between the first and second delayed tests could provide a more credible result on durable learning.

8. The results of the pre-test showed that groups were not equivalent, as the TBLT scores were higher than the other groups which could have an effect on the results of this study and due to the limitation of time and the availability of students, it was not possible to get access to another group to test.

9. Although this study was based on a mixed methods design (quantitative and qualitative), it used qualitative data to support the main findings from quantitative data. Utilising equal amounts of quantitative and qualitative data, such as observation, focus-group interviews, additional tests may have affected the results of this study.

Having outlined the limitations of this study, the next section attempts to provide implications for future research.

### **8.6 Implications for future research**

It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide Saudi EFL teachers with a good opportunity and reasons to reconsider teaching DMs and reconsider their own teaching approaches in order to aid students with their presentation skills and improve the efficiency of teaching English in EFL settings. Thus, based on the findings of the current study, a number of implications for future research have been made:

1. EFL teachers need to pay attention to teaching as many DMs as possible for different functions to encourage learners to use them in speaking and in other language skills. In the current study, the scope is narrowed to include SDMs only in order to ensure presentations are organised and coherent, focusing on others such as interpersonal DMs may help learners in using everyday English. Maschler and Schiffrin (2015) pointed out that,

Discourse markers tell us not only about the linguistic properties (e.g., semantic and pragmatic meanings, source, functions) of a set of frequently used expressions, and the organization of social interactions and situations in which they are used, but also about the cognitive, expressive, social, and textual competence of those who use them. Because the functions of markers are so broad, any and all analyses of markers - even those focusing on only a relatively narrow aspect of their meaning or a small portion of their uses - can teach us something about their role in discourse (p. 205).

2. Teachers in Saudi Arabia should also consider teaching the use of DMs for writing and other language skills. The majority of studies and publications Literature on DMs in the Saudi EFL context have been descriptive and focused on the use and the frequency of DMs in a variety of skills rather than on how they could be taught to Saudi EFL learners. More studies on teaching DMs on productive skills (speaking and writing) to EFL learners in Saudi Arabia are needed. For example, Fung (2010) emphasised the importance of teaching DMs for writing skills and argued that “English teachers seldom take discourse markers seriously when they teach writing. Therefore, most students use discourse markers in their writing just following their intuition toward cohesion and coherence” (p. 301). In brief, empirical research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of teaching DMs on the development of learners’ skills.

3. It is unrealistic to claim that a sole teaching approach influences learning or acquisition of DMs. Thus, it is crucial to compare the impact of different teaching methods on the learning/acquisition of DMs in the Saudi EFL context. In addition, teachers should decide on the best way to teach their learners or try different interventions. However, there are a number of factors which may affect learning, such as learners' level of English, motivation and whether specific DMs are needed for writing, reading, speaking or listening.
4. Focusing on a small number of learners for a longer period could provide more data about individual learners' learning and acquisition of target DMs.
5. A much more systematic and reliable approach would include teaching DMs for a longer time (throughout the whole term) before investigating their use in learners' discourse in order to build strong findings on learners' learning and acquisition of DMs following instruction. Furthermore, it would be useful to undertake studies with different groups of learners, such as those at private schools, international schools, language schools, or HE institutions.
6. Finally, needs analysis is one of the best ways to assess learners' needs and based on this assessment, decisions could be made in regard to which DMs should be taught to Saudi EFL learners and for what function, based on their needs.

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## **Appendix 1: A Sample summary of lessons**

Sample 1. Model for teaching DMs (Task-based language teaching approach)

**Context:** EFL learners, B2 level, Foundation year programme, Taibah University, Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

**Lesson:** *One.*

**Target discourse markers:** First, second, next, then, finally.

**Function:** structural (sequencing)

### **Pre-task: non-task preparation activities, (Elicit & Set up)**

Introduce and define the topic.

**Eliciting information:** Do you think Madinah is a good place to live in? Why?

**Eliciting Vocabulary in order to prepare students for the task ahead:**

What are the things that you would like to change in our society?

**Set up the topic:** Today we are going to talk about things you would like to change in our society.

---

### **Task cycle (Monitor + guide)**

#### **Decision-Making Task,**

- Discuss in groups five things you would like to change in our society and why. You should agree on a list of five things and five reasons. (Listing things, brainstorming vocabulary and shared personal experiences). (**Productive task – speaking**). (Students work in groups, Consensus building)

#### **Planning,**

- Students prepare what five things they would like to change and why.
- Rehearse what they will say in their presentations.

#### **Report,**

- Students present their spoken reports to the class.
- 

#### **Language focus:**

- Listen to an example of a good presentation.
- Find out the differences between the model and your own presentation

- Find DMs
- Repeat your performance (oral presentation)

**Sample 2. Model for teaching DMs (inductive Presentation, Practice, Production PPP approach)**

**Context:** EFL learners, B2 level, Foundation year programme, Taibah University, Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

**Lesson:** *One*.

**Target discourse markers:** First, second, next, then, finally.

**Function:** structural (sequencing)

**Presentation:**

1. Students discuss in pairs/in groups the five things they would like to change in our society and why.
2. Students are given the task (discuss in groups five things you would like to change in our society and why).
3. Students listen to me (the researcher and other people) do the same task and write down the difference in the language in this conversation and their conversation.
4. Students are given transcript with the DMs in the dialogue blanked out. They discuss what they think is missing from each space. They then listen and check.
5. Students then asked to find DMs (sequence function).
6. Class discussion.

**Practice tasks:**

Mixed up groups and ask students to have their 5 things they would like to change and discuss them in their new groups and advice them to use the DMs in their discussion (write them on board or DMs on cards).

**Production tasks:**

1. After sharing opinions with other students, they will be asked to go to their original groups and agree for five things they would like to change and why.
2. Ask students to write a presentation together using the taught DMs
3. Students will present their presentation in front of the class and teacher will give them feedback.

## **Appendix 2: Interview questions**

**NOTE:** Part one and two will be carried out within the same interview on the same time.

### **Part One (DMs)**

Hi,

How are you? You are now in the foundation year; do you want to study any specific course?

We studied Discourse Markers over five lessons and you gave group presentation, what did you think of those lessons?

Do you think learning DMs is important in giving presentation? If yes/no why?

Do you think the language we focused on (DMs) are useful to you? Why? /why not?

Do you think practicing DMs in giving a presentation is useful to you? Why? / why not?

Do you think structural Discourse Markers for giving presentation are difficult to learn? if yes or no can you explain why?

Have you done a group or individual presentations before? If yes do you think your group presentation in the five lessons was different from any one you have done before?

What are the differences in your presentation before and after learning DMs?

### **Part Two (lessons and teaching methods)**

Do you think the way we studied in the classes was different from the way of your normal classes? If yes how it is different?

What did you enjoy about these lessons? Can you give examples?

Did you notice your lessons had some kind of organisation? If so, can you describe how you think it was organised?

Do you like this approach? Why / why not?

What differences can you see between the method in my classes and your normal teaching methods?

Do you think the lessons and the teaching methods help you to understand the language we studied better? If no, can you explain?

Do you think lessons and the teaching methods help you to use the language we studied? If yes, how? If (no or unsure) explain?

Is there anything you would like to add or do you have any comments about the lessons?

**Appendix 3:** Presentation Transcription Convention quoted from (Carter, 2004, p. 220),  
Language and Creativity: the art of the common talk, Carter, R, 2004, Routledge.

Transcription convention	Symbol	Explanation
Speaker codes	<S01> <S02>	Each speaker is numbered e.g. first student <S01>, <S02> second student...etc.
Extra linguistic information	[ ]	This includes laughter, coughing and inaudible speech on the tape.
Unfinished words	=	Speakers not only change their course of in mind-sentence but also in the middle of individual words.
Punctuation	. ? ,	A full stop or question mark is used to mark the end of a sentence.



**Appendix 4:** Interviews' transcription convention.

**Heading:** consists of interviewee number and group name such as TBLT.

**Lines:** adding numbers to each line to refer to the information easily.

**Speaker codes:** T for Teacher and S for student

**Capital letters:** for beginning sentences

**Punctuation:** such as Question marks for main question and full stops

**[ ] brackets:** for Extra linguistics information such as laughing, coughing ...etc.

**Three dots (...)** for pauses, or **a dash (–)** for interrupted thoughts.

## **Appendix 5: Sample of Students' presentations transcriptions**

### **Pre-test/ TBLT/ G3**

<S01> In this presentation we are going to talk about the famous scientist Steven William Hoken who was born on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1942 umm, he is 74 and born in oxford, England, he is British, he has 3 children umm, he is um, he is physicist cosmologist and author and director of research in University of Cambridge he is married. His three children are Robert, Lucy and Timothy. <S02> And [STUDENT NAME DELETED] will going to talk about his education, his education ummm **well**, um from his childhood he was so smart and intelligent and he was, he was the first one in every in every subject and after he know, he knew about his disease he decided to stop his education but his girlfriend told him that he will he will continue his education because he is he is very smart, **so**, he continued his education and with with, when he became, I mean he cannot move he made a machine that can that can talk and think what you want to say so, now he is like a teacher and a student because he always he learn about something in physics. Silence....uh uh , he has when he was in year 2 he discovered that he has a rare disease called armtrific illness also known as [ ] disease or he that has gradually paralyzed him over decades. <S03> Hoken has experience increasing clumsiness during his final year at Oxford including a fall from upstairs difficulties... the problems worsen and his speech become slightly scared his [ ] Changed when he returned home for Christmas, even though he had a rare disease and incurable disease he decided to continue his education and he even got because.. like .. the greatest scientist and cosmologist, he has also has such an amazing theories such as [ ] theories. And now we moved to his [ ] with [STUDENT NAME DELETED] <S04> Steven Hoken is presented by his daughter Lucy Hoken at the lectures he gave. Hoken has received a noble award and honours. In 1966 he get Adam's prize and get a lot of awards after that he got a prize in 2012. That it.

### **Post-test/ DED-PPP/L4/ G3**

<S01> Ok, in this preset= presentation I will talk about few things about marriage in our culture. First, marriage age second the reasons behind choosing the groom and the bride next my own choice of my future husband and finally wedding preparation. First, average marriage marriage age in our culture for women between 17 to 25 for men between 25 to

35. In my opinion it's not good to marriage in young age because you are not able to take responsibilities yet. <S02> **Now** I am going to talk about reasons behind using the groom from the girls' family. Family choosing the groom according to many thing for example his manner, his degrees and his money. Some girls says if he has money he has every thing. His job position is important too. Let's move to the characteristics of husband most families looking for husband who is good person and has good manners and he should has good character and affords paying for life expenses. The girls' family most most of the time ask about the bride and her family they choose the bride based on her her manners, her family and her beauty. <S03> **Let's move on to** the wedding preparation. First, we have Henna night, Henna Night there are many family still do it, after that the final wedding party the groom wear the traditional Thob and Bisht and the bride wear beautiful dress.

## **Appendix 6: Students' interviews transcriptions**

### **Interviewee 3, TBLT group**

- 1    **T:** Hi,  
2    How are you?  
3    **S:** Good.  
4    **T:** You are now in the foundation year; do you want to study any specific course?  
5    **S:** Medical if God wills.  
6    **T:** Ok, good luck to you  
7    **T:** We were studying Discourse Markers over the past five lessons and you've given a  
8    group presentation, what did you think of those lessons?  
9    **S:** It's considered to be useful but it might be more useful to students who do not  
10   previously know these words. But for us ... we knew these words and we usually study  
11   them so I feel it is like a revision for us.  
12   **T:** Do you think learning DMs is important in giving presentations?  
13   **S:** Yes, definitely.  
14   **T:** why?  
15   **S:** It makes my paragraphs and my speech more organised and – like that.  
16   **T:** Do you think the language we focused on (DMs) are useful to you?  
17   **S:** In which way?  
18   **T:** In using these words in a presentation?  
19   **S:** Yes, of course because next time when I want to write a presentation I will make sure  
20   to organise my information and ... how I am going to start and finish my talk.  
21   **T:** So, do you think, it is useful?  
22   **S:** Yes it is useful.  
23   **T:** Do you think practicing DMs in giving a presentation is useful to you?  
24   **S:** Yes.  
25   **T:** why?  
26   **S:** Because as I told you before it will make my presentation more organised and the  
27   listener will understand and follow me better.  
28   **T:** Do you think structural Discourse Markers for giving presentation are difficult to  
29   learn?  
30   **S:** No, it was very easy.  
31   **T:** Can you explain why? Have you learned them before?

32 **S:** We learnt these words before but they tell us that ‘for example’ is to give an example  
 33 but they did not tell us to use it when writing presentations or – something like that.

34 **T:** Have you done group or individual presentations before?

35 **S:** Yes.

36 **T:** What are the differences in your presentation before and after learning DMs?

37 **S:** I feel when you are doing a group presentation, there will be organisation for the  
 38 listeners ... I mean each student talks about a specific topic and as a result the listeners in  
 39 front of us will understand the topic and when other students speak, the voice will be  
 40 changed and things like that and he will pay attention again unlike when its individual I  
 41 think the person will be distracted because it’s the same voice and he won’t concentrate  
 42 on different topics.

43 **T:** Can you tell me the difference between your group presentation before and after  
 44 learning DMs?

45 **S:** Our teacher asked us for PowerPoint ... and also each student has a limited time and  
 46 we did more than one and sometimes she asked us to talk without any rules or something  
 47 like that. But one time she told us when you want to tell the person to come and give his  
 48 topic you should use ‘let’s move on to’.

49 **T:** Let’s move on to the second part of the interview (lessons and teaching methods).

50 **T:** Do you think the way we studied in the classes was different from the way of your  
 51 normal classes?

52 **S:** No, it’s not the same

53 **T:** Can you explain how it is different?

54 **S:** I mean the sequencing of topics is different, maybe our teacher only tells us what we  
 55 will learn today and lets us apply it but with you I do not know if this is your methods or  
 56 not but you gave us a topic and you asked us to give a presentation, applying first and  
 57 then we find out what we were supposed to do. I mean it's the way round.

58 **T:** What did you enjoy about these lessons?

59 **S:** The class was comfortable, it’s considered as comfortable and you can feel comfortable  
 60 because I mean, we learned them before, I feel comfortable using them, and it is easy.

61 **T:** Did you notice your lessons had some kind of organisation?

62 **S:** What do you mean?

63 **T:** For example, did you notice that my explanation of the lesson was organised?

64 **S:** Yes, I feel, as I said before, we applied first and then you told us the main idea.

65 **T:** Do you like this approach?

66 **S:** For me ... I like when the person tells me what I am supposed to do and then I apply  
67 it.

68 **T:** So, you prefer having the rule first and then you apply based on that rule?

69 **S:** Yes, but maybe your method is long lasting because it helps us learn from our mistakes.

70 **T:** What differences can you see between the method in my classes and your normal  
71 classes?

72 **S:** In normal classes the teacher gives the main idea and then we do exercises and – like  
73 that but you, as I told u, got us to apply first and then gave us the main idea.

74 **T:** Ok, do you think the lessons and the teaching methods have helped you to understand  
75 the language we studied better?

76 **S:** ... I cannot say because I knew these words before.

77 **T:** Do you think the lessons and the teaching methods have helped you to use the language  
78 we studied?

79 **S:** Yes.

80 **T:** How?

81 **S:** Because I knew the functions of them before but the course-book did not revise them  
82 so, these lessons I considered as a revision and next time we will know that I have to  
83 arrange topics, I have to begin with something, ... I have to put in a specific word when  
84 I want to change the topic.

85 **T:** Is there anything you would like to add or do you have any comments about the  
86 lessons?

87 **S:** ...the teaching method is nice, but if you use visual aids it will make the class more  
88 interesting, that's it.

89 **T:** Thanks for your help and wish you all the best.

90 **S:** Thanks.

## **Appendix 7: Sample of coded interview data**

### **DMs function**

“It has a functional benefit which is to get our meaning across in an easy and nice way” (Inductive PPP interviewee 3, line 13)

“The only thing that we can benefit a lot from is to know where to use them and in which position” (TBLT interviewee 4, line 25)

### **Talk organisation**

“These words organise my story or the composition that I want to say” (Deductive PPP interviewee 1, line 13)

“It organised my paragraphs” (Inductive PPP interviewee 1, line 17)

“They make my presentation more organised” (TBLT interviewee 2, line 14)

### **Giving presentation**

“It was my first time giving a presentation in front of girls and I was not really ... but you know I feel no, I overcame my fears of somebody asking me to do presentation” (Deductive PPP interviewee 4, line 30)

“It’s nice because I will feel more confident and learn how to present in a good way, and how to stand up. I’ll feel more comfortable doing it next time” (inductive PPP Interviewee 3, line 20)

“we felt comfortable in giving presentations as we had a good length of time to give the presentation as well as prepare” (TBLT interviewee 4, line 41)

### **Discourse Markers**

“They are not difficult and not easy” (Deductive PPP interviewee 4, line 22)

“I feel like some of the words, we learnt them, but we did not know how to use them and we did not know how to put them in sentences” (Inductive PPP interviewee 2, line 7)

“I felt they were useful but at the same time too simple” (TBLT interviewee 4, line 9)

## Appendix 8: Exit slips

<p>Ded PPP</p>	<p>هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة؟ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> نعم أو <input type="checkbox"/> لا</p> <p>إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا؟)</p> <p>لاني شخصياً استفدت من هذه الطريقة في كسب حاجتي الزمنية عن حقابة الجمهور</p> <p>Personally, I benefited a lot from this method by overcoming my fear of speaking in front of audience.</p>
<p>Ded PPP</p>	<p>هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة؟ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> نعم أو <input type="checkbox"/> لا</p> <p>إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا؟)</p> <p>تعلمنا أشياء جديدة</p> <p>we learned new vocabulary</p>
<p>Ded PPP</p>	<p>هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة؟ <input type="checkbox"/> نعم أو <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> لا</p> <p>إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا؟)</p> <p>مادة جرداً ولا يوجد بها (أي نوع من التشويق)</p> <p>It was boring and not interesting</p>
<p>Ded PPP</p>	<p>هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة؟ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> نعم أو <input type="checkbox"/> لا</p> <p>إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا؟)</p> <p>تعلمنا كلمات جديدة واستخدمنا كل كلمة من هذه الكلمات</p> <p>We learned new words and applied them to our presentation, which was really useful.</p>



Inductive PPP

هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة؟ ☐ نعم أو ☒ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا)

waste of time

waste of time

Inductive PPP

هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة؟ ☒ نعم أو ☐ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا)

لأننا استفدنا كثير من المحادثات وارتبطنا  
بالحديث

we benefitted from the group work & in improving  
our language.

Inductive PPP

هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة؟ ☒ نعم أو ☐ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا)

طريقة مفيدة جداً لأنها تتيح لي الفرصة للتقرب على زملائي أكثر وتبادل الخبرات  
معهم

Useful and enjoyable method as it enables me the opportunity  
to know my group members & exchange ideas & experiences.

Inductive PPP

هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة؟ ☒ نعم أو ☐ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا)

لأنني كنت من تعلم ~~اللغة~~ نفسي في الارتجال والحديث  
طالعة واستخدم الكلمات الجديدة

because it enables me to improve myself & speak fluently  
and use the new words.

TBLT group

هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة ؟ ☒ نعم أو ☐ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا)

الشعر: د. طارق الشناوي

Practice makes presentations easier

TBLT group

هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة ؟ ☒ نعم أو ☐ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا)

بصراحة أنا لم أتمكن إلا من ثلاث محاضرات، وأجبتني أنا فقط شيء جوي  
من بطايتي (لماذا)

I attended only three classes and I did not feel that I learned new things.

TBLT group

هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة ؟ ☒ نعم أو ☐ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا)

لا أظن أن الطلاب كانوا عرضوا تقديمهم مما غلبهم في ترتيب الأفكار

Useful because it helps students to practice presentations, which helps them in organising their ideas.

TBLT group

هل تعتقد أن الطريقة التي درسنا بها مفيدة ونافعة ؟ ☒ نعم أو ☐ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم أو لا (لماذا)

honestly, I have no idea

**Appendix 9: information sheet (English and Arabic versions)**

**SAMPLE participant information sheet (A copy in Arabic language will be provided)**

**Full title of Project: An analysis of the effects of explicit teaching on the acquisition of spoken discourse markers in EFL speaking classes in Saudi Arabia.**

**Name: Budoor Muslim Alraddadi (Principal Investigator)**

**Address: School of Languages and Global Studies, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, United Kingdom.**

**Email: [bmjalraddadi@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:bmjalraddadi@uclan.ac.uk) (Mobile) UK +447463871793, Saudi Arabia +966551387000**

*You are being invited to take part in a research study, which I am undertaking as part of a PhD at the University of Central Lancashire, UK. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.*

The purpose of this study is to present a clearer understanding of the nature of spoken language in EFL speaking classes in the foundation year in Saudi Arabia by determining which English discourse markers (DMs) are used in talk (giving presentations) (Such as Now, Okay, lets start, first, second etc.) and the functions of these (opening and closing conversation, sequencing etc.) In doing so, I aim to investigate the most appropriate ways of teaching DMs in this specific context. The effect of using authentic materials to develop language use in different situations and the ability to speak confidently and fluently in giving presentations will also be considered. Generally, the aim of using DMs is to make the presentation more organised and coherent. The findings of this study will identify the usefulness of teaching DMs in EFL classes. My study involves teaching some materials as well as interview students.

In order to undertake this study I need volunteers who are learners in the foundation year at Taibah University. Your participation will help with the development of English as foreign language teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia as the recommendations (based on the research

findings) could lead to the development of teaching in the future. There will be no impact on your marks or examination scores whether you volunteer or not. If you wish to take part, please indicate this to the researcher and sign the attached consent form. If you do not wish to take part, please indicate this to the researcher. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point of the research process before the researcher submits her work and if you do so, all data relating to you will be destroyed. Please email, telephone or tell the researcher if you wish to withdraw any data you do provide will be used only for the intended purposes and will be anonymous so you cannot be identified from the data. In addition, the student's words in presentations and interviews may be quoted in published research, but names will be anonymous.

Thank you.



**عنوان المشروع كاملاً:** تحليل تأثير التدريس المفسر على إكتساب علامات اللغة المتحدثة في صفوف المحادثة (تدريس اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية) في المملكة العربية السعودية

**اسم الباحث الاساسي:** بدور مسلم جابر الراددي

**العنوان:** كلية اللغات، الأدب والدراسات الدولية، جامعة سنترال لانكشير، بريستون، المملكة المتحدة (بريطانيا).

ايميل: [bmjalraddadi@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:bmjalraddadi@uclan.ac.uk) جوال ( المملكة المتحدة) 00447463871793 ، جوال (المملكة العربية السعودية) 00966551387000

أنتي مدعوة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية اللي أجريها كجزء من دراستي لمرحلة الدكتوراة في جامعة سنترال لانكشير (بريطانيا).

قبل إتخاذ القرار حبال مشاركتك او عدمها في هذه الدراسة، من المهم جداً الاطلاع على السبب وراء اجراء هذه الدراسة وماذا تشتمل عليه، الرجاء أخذ بعض الوقت في قراءة المعلومات التالية بتركيز.

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو عرض فهم واضح لطبيعة اللغة المتحدثة في صفوف اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السنة التحضيرية في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال تحديد ماهي علامات اللغة الإنجليزية مثل (Now, Ok, Let's start, first, second) المستخدمة في الكلام اثناء القيام بالعروض الشفهية باللغة الانجليزية لمواضيع معينة والغرض من استخدام هذه العلامات مثل (فتح واغلاق المحادثات، التسلسل ... الخ) وبإجراء هذه الدراسة أهدف إلى البحث عن أفضل طرق لتدريس علامات اللغة في هذا السياق. كما أن مدى تأثير استخدام مواد تعليمية حقيقية (مواضيع من واقع المجتمع) في تطوير استخدام اللغة في مواضيع مختلفة والقدرة على التحدث بثقة وطلاقة في تقديم وعرض موضوع شفهياً سوف يؤخذ بعين الاعتبار. علامات الكلام عموماً تستخدم لجعل العرض التقديمي منظم ومتربط لذلك، سوف تساهم نتائج هذه الدراسة بتحديد الفائدة من تدريس علامات الكلام في صفوف تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. سوف تشتمل الدراسة على تدريس بعض المواد بالإضافة إلى عمل مقابلات مع الطالبات.

من أجل إجراء هذه الدراسة احتاج لطالبات متطوعات من السنة التحضيرية في جامعة طيبة. المشاركة في هذه الدراسة سوف تساعد في تطوير تدريس وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المملكة العربية السعودية والتوصيات اللي سوف تقدم بعد إنهاء الدراسة والمتضمنه علي نتائج البحث قد تقود إلى تطوير عملية التدريس في المستقبل.

اود التنويه بأنه لن يكون هناك أي تأثير على درجاتك أو درجات اختباراتك سواءاً اشتركتي في هذه الدراسة أو لم تشتركي. إذا كان لديك الرغبة في المشاركة الرجاء اخبار الباحثة بذلك وتوقيع ورقة الموافقة واذا لم يكن لديك الرغبة في المشاركة الرجاء اخبار الباحثة ايضاً.

اضافة الى ذلك، لديك الحق في الانسحاب أي وقت من هذا البحث في أي مرحلة من مراحل البحث وقبل تسليم الباحثة عملها. في حال الانسحاب، كل المعلومات المتعلقة بك سوف تتلف. الرجاء ارسال إيميل او الإتصال أو إخبار الباحثة شفهيأ اذا كانت لديك الرغبة بالانسحاب. أي معلومات تزودينها سوف تستخدم لأغراض البحث وسوف تكون مجهولة الأسماء وبالتالي لن تعرف هويتك من البيانات. بالإضافة إلي ذلك، قد تقتبس عبارات من العروض التقديمية للطالبات ومقابلاتهم لأغراض النشر، في حال تم ذلك، لن يشار الى اسماء الطالبات المقتبس منهن.

شكراً جزيلاً

**Appendix 10: Consent form (English and Arabic versions)**

**SAMPLE CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNERS (A copy in Arabic language will be provided)**

**Full title of Project: An analysis of the effects of explicit teaching on the acquisition of spoken discourse markers in EFL speaking classes in Saudi Arabia.**

**Name: Budoor Muslim Alraddadi**

**Please initial box**

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet, dated .....  
for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information, asked  
questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at  
any time, without giving reason.

☐

I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been  
anonymised) in a specialist data centre and may be used for future research.

☐

I understand that it will not be possible to withdraw my data from the study  
after final analysis has been undertaken

**YES**

**NO**

I agree to the interview / classroom observation being audio recorded

☐☐

I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.

☐☐

**Address: School of Languages and Global Studies, University of Central Lancashire,  
Preston, PR1 2HE, United Kingdom.**

**Email: Bmjalraddadi@uclan.ac.uk**

---

Name of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature

---

Name of Researcher

---

Date

---

Signature

عنوان المشروع كاملاً: تحليل تأثير التدريس المفسر على إكتساب علامات الكلام المتحدثة في صفوف المحادثة (تدريس اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية) في المملكة العربية السعودية

اسم الباحث الاساسي: بدور مسلم جابر الراددي

العنوان: كلية اللغات، الأدب والدراسات الدولية، جامعة سنترال لانكشير، بريستون، المملكة المتحدة (بريطانيا).

ايميل: [bmjalraddadi@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:bmjalraddadi@uclan.ac.uk) جوال ( المملكة المتحدة) 00447463871793 ، جوال (المملكة العربية السعودية) 00966551387000

ضعي صح في المربع

☐

أقر بأنني قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات المؤرخة للدراسة المذكورة أعلاه وكانت لدي الفرص

للتفكير في المشاركة في الدراسة وطرح اي اسئلة تتعلق بها وقد حصلت على الإجابات المرضية.

☐

أتفهم بأن مشاركتي تطوعية ولدي الحرية للإنسحاب في أي وقت بدون إعطاء أسباب.

☐

أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه.

☐

أوافق على أن البيانات المجمعة في هذه الدراسة قد تخزن (بدون أسماء) في مركز خاص للمعلومات وقد تستخدم في أبحاث مستقبلية.

☐

أفهم أنه من المستحيل سحب بياناتي من هذه الدراسة بعد مرحلة إجراء التحليل النهائي.

اختاري نعم او لا:

نعم لا

☐☐☐

أوافق على التسجيل الصوتي فقط للمحادثات وتقديم العروض.

أوافق على استخدام اقتباسات بدون أسماء (مجهولة) في النشر.

نوافق انا والباحث على توقيع وكتابة تاريخ نموذج الموافقة هذا .

التوقيع

التاريخ

إسم المشاركة

التوقيع

التاريخ

إسم الباحثة



### The Effect of Teaching Structural Discourse Markers in an EFL Classroom Setting

Budoor Muslim Alraddadi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Languages, Literature and International Studies (SOLLIS), University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), UK

Correspondence: Budoor Muslim Alraddadi, School of Languages, Literature and International Studies (SOLLIS), University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), UK, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 2HE, UK. E-mail: b.alraddadi@hotmail.com

Received: January 10, 2016 Accepted: April 29, 2016 Online Published: May 10, 2016

doi: 10.5539/elt.v9n7p16 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n7p16>

#### Abstract

This study aimed to explore the effects of explicit teaching on the acquisition of spoken discourse markers (DMs) on EFL learners' presentation production. It also aimed to measure the impact of two different treatments on the acquisition of a set of DMs.

This study is an experimental study and focuses on the overall production of spoken structural DMs in pre and post instruction where two particular teaching methods are employed. For this purpose, 41 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) female learners from the foundation program participated and they were on the Upper intermediate or B2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference Ability Scale (CEFR) at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. Learners were divided into two groups; one group was taught using Task-Based-Language Teaching method (TBLT) while for the other group was taught using the Presentation-Practice-Production model (PPP) was used. Based on the functions of structural discourse markers, five selected topics were taught by the researcher for two hours per lesson, which makes up ten hours per group.

The study mainly aspires to answer three questions; Firstly, it explores which discourse markers do Saudi EFL learners use in giving presentations in English speaking classes (pre-test) and the reason for doing so, is to examine the progress of learners use of DMs through the whole teaching period. Secondly, it investigates which DMs do Saudi learners use after instruction in the immediate post-test and in the delayed post-test that is four weeks after the instruction. Finally, by carrying out a comparative analysis between (TBLT and PPP) the study aims to find out which teaching method is more effective and why.

**Keywords:** discourse markers, EFL learners, explicit instruction, giving presentation, TBLT & PPP

#### 1. Background

Recent studies in corpus linguistics have examined specific aspects of spoken grammar particularly in unplanned speech. According to McCarthy and Carter (2001, p. 1), "spoken grammars have uniquely special qualities that distinguish them from written ones". There are many elements of spoken grammar, such as:

- discourse markers, e.g. "I mean", "I see", "Ok", "well", "right";
- ellipsis, e.g. "... got an awful cold" (ellipsis of "I've");
- vague language, e.g. "kind of" and "or something", as in "Can you get me a sandwich or something?"

(Carter & McCarthy, 1995, 1997, 2006; McCarthy & Carter, 1995)

In spoken discourse, according to Fung and Carter (2007), the amount and frequency of DM use is significant in comparison to the use of other forms because they serve important textual and interpersonal functions. Schiffrin (1987), Maschler (1998) and Fraser (1999) agree that DMs act as influential interactional features rather than having a purely grammatical function. One of the most important features of using DMs is to constitute and organize talk. DMs have different/open grammar classes for example "Now" can be an adverb and "So" can be a conjunction. So, based on their grammatical classes "Now" and "So" are not DMs here (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, Fung & Carter, 2007). Furthermore, they can be single words such as "First" or longer expressions such as "Let's move on to". According to Fung and Carter (2007) DMs are multifunctional words and as an example

“so” and “Now” can be used for both summarizing and shifting topics. Furthermore, DMs have been studied from different perspectives in linguistics. Perhaps for this reason, as Jucker and Ziv (1998a) state, “there is no generally agreed upon definition of the term ‘discourse marker’” (p. 1) and the same holds true for their functions. Nonetheless, there is acknowledgement that DMs have a pragmatic meaning in discourse and consequently play a significant role in speakers’ pragmatic competence because they “contribute to the pragmatic meaning of utterances” (Müller, 2005, p. 1). Thus, the following paragraph covers a number of definitions from different perspectives. Schiffrin (1987) defines DMs as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (p. 31). From a grammatical-pragmatic perspective, Fraser (1999) defines them as “a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases” (p. 931). Fraser holds the view that DMs “contribute to the interpretation of an utterance rather than to its propositional content” (1999, p. 946). He noted that DMs connect two segments in utterances (Fraser, 1999). Fraser, also distinguished different types of DMs and identified two main categories:

- 1) DMs which relate to messages such as:
  - a) Contrastive: (al) though, but, etc.
  - b) Collateral: above all, also, etc.
- 2) DMs which relate to topics, such as: back to the original topic, by the way, etc.

(Fraser, 1999, pp. 946-950)

Fraser (1990) notes that DMs are highly beneficial guides for explaining the intention of the speakers in communication and omitting them from the discourse could lead to a breakdown in communication. In support of Fraser’s previous argument, it can be argued that to give a good oral presentation, learners’ should use cohesive devices (DMs), which will aid the coherence of the presentation.

#### 1.1 The Instruction of DMs

There are a limited number of studies conducted on the instruction of DMs in EFL contexts, for example (Aidinlou & Shahrokhi, 2012; Rahimi & Riasati, 2012; Sadeghi & Heidaryan, 2012). All studies revealed similar findings, namely explicit instruction has a positive impact on learners’ production. The main difference being that each study focused on a different genre: writing skills, oral production and listening comprehension, respectively. In all these studies the addition of a delayed post-test would have been beneficial to measure the long-lasting effects of teaching DMs on learners’ acquisition. Rahimi and Riasati (2012) stated that using DMs will help learners to perform better in spoken skills. In English as a Second Language context (ESL) Jones (2009) carried out a small-scale study with two groups, both of which were given the same DMs using two different teaching approaches: illustration, interaction and induction (III) and presentation, practice and production (PPP). The results demonstrated that PPP had a considerable effect on learners’ use of the taught DMs.

#### 1.2 Teaching Methods in the Saudi Arabian EFL Context and Study Application

According to Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013), within the Saudi context “explicit classroom teaching should be provided to improve the knowledge of four basic skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking” (p. 117). However, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia tend to follow traditional methods (Shah et al., 2013). It has been labelled by Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013 and Shehdeh, 2010 as an insufficient method since it is teacher-centred. Al-Seghayer stated “Saudi EFL teacher is viewed as a material presenter and content demonstrator, not as a manager of language learning situations” (2014, p. 20). English teaching methods in Saudi Arabia context are based heavily on two teaching methods respectively: the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and Grammar Translation Method (GTM). In ALM, teachers are engaging learners in drills and repetition of new grammatical structures and new vocabularies and phrases (Al-Seghayer, 2014). While in GTM, there is an emphasis on explaining grammatical forms and structures and translating texts (Al-Seghayer, 2011). Khan (2011) argued that teachers in Saudi Arabia apply “the traditional grammar and translation method as it seems easier for them as well as the students. And, finally the target language suffers” (p. 119). I agree with Khan (2011) in that, grammar translation method might be easier for both teachers and learners but the most important factor in this process is ‘learners’ not ‘teachers’. In fact, learners are not exposed to language use outside their classes. Due to lack of language use, Saudi EFL learners need to practice and communicate the language effectively within the classroom in order for them to acquire the input/target forms. Based on the previous discussions and having provided an overview of the nature of teaching English in the Saudi context, it is significant to consider the effectiveness of different communicative teaching methods. In this particular study both TBLT and PPP will be introduced differently. TBLT will be applied inductively while PPP will be applied deductively. Inductive and deductive teaching are two different ways of teaching. Richards and Schmidt (2010) defined inductive learning

as: “learners are not taught the grammatical or other types of rules directly but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language” (p. 158). On other hand, they also defined deductive learning as “an approach to language teaching in which learners are taught rules and given specific information about a language” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 158). Applying TBLT and the PPP model (new way of teaching in this context) will help establish the most effective way of teaching DMs to learners in this specific context in terms of their effects on learners’ spoken skills. Both TBLT and PPP will be used within the communicative approach. For the purposes of this study, as students in the Saudi context are expected to give a presentation as part of their studies. I chose to focus on the structural function to aid students in structuring their speech, for example, opening/closing topics and sequencing points in a presentation. As Fung and Carter (2007) point out, “Structurally, [DMs] are used to orientate and organize the discourse in progress and signal links and transitions between topics” (p. 435). The proposed target DMs are drawn from Fung and Carter (2007), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Target structural DMs

Function	English discourse marker
Opening and closing topics	Now, OK/okay, right, well, let’s start. Ok, Right
Sequencing	First, second, next, then, finally
Giving examples	For example, Like.
Topic shifts	So, now, well, let’s turn to, let’s move on to
Summarizing opinions	So, to conclude

Source: Fung & Carter, 2007, p. 418.

### 1.3 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Saudi Arabia

According to Rahman & Alhaisoni (2013), teachers in Saudi Arabia find it hard to employ communicative methodologies and this is as a result of many institutional and sociocultural restrictions. However, Shah *et al.* (2013) argue that there is a demand for adopting CLT in EFL contexts. Al-Seghayer (2014) summarized these restrictions under four key constraints: beliefs, curriculum, pedagogical and administrative constraints. Teaching methods constraint has been discussed before. In brief, teachers need to rethink more about the effectiveness of teaching English to learners regardless of the constraints within this context as I believe they can overcome these obstacles but it needs solid effort and dedication from them. There is also a need for the implementation of communicative teaching methods. Shehdeh (2010) argues that, learners’ exposure to English needs to be maximized by adopting communicative tasks as well as increasing the learners’ talking time. Shah *et al.* (2013) also contend that teachers need to make efforts in involving their students in communicative activities.

### 1.4 PPP model

The PPP model is a form-focused approach and is common in that many teachers use it and many textbooks are based on it. PPP stands for presentation, practice and production (Thornbury, 2006). Willis and Willis (2007) point out the main features of this method as:

- 1) A focus on one or two forms.
- 2) This focus on form comes before learners engage in communicative activity.
- 3) The teacher has control of learner language.
- 4) The success of the procedure is judged in terms of whether or not learners produce the forms with an acceptable level of accuracy.

In addition, the sequencing of the lesson is as follows:

- **Presentation:** grammar structures are explained and presented by the teacher or elicited from the learners
- **Practice:** learners practise using these structures (accuracy)
- **Production:** learners produce the language (fluency)

(Thornbury, 2006, p. 172)

### 1.5 Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has attracted the attention of many scholars such as Ellis (2005) and Samuda and Bygate (2008) and in recent years there has been increased interest in exploring TBLT in classroom settings in different contexts (Leaver & Willis, 2004; Littlewood, 2007; Van den Branden, 2006). Moreover, studies have also focused on different aspects of TBLT and the impact of the design and implementation of tasks on learners' oral output. Many researchers support the use of TBLT (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Long, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996). Richards and Schmidt (2010) define TBLT as "a teaching approach based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the central units for the planning and delivery of instruction" (p. 585). Willis and Willis (2007) state "the most effective way to teach a language is by engaging learners in real language use in the classroom. This is done by designing tasks –discussions, problems, games and so on – which require learners to use the language for themselves" (p. 1). In this approach, language is viewed as a means of communication and learners are encouraged to use the language. The approach perceives "meaning as the starting point for language development, and ... form as developing from meaning" (W. Willis & D. Willis, 2007, p. 7). According to Carless, (2012) "TBLT approaches the acquisition of grammatical form in a different way to the more explicit teacher-fronted explanation practiced by many teachers". (p. 348). So, the main objective of applying TBLT in this context is to test out the suitability of the implementation of TBLT in university settings particularly in the Saudi EFL context as well as deciding whether or not we need to move away from the traditional methods to the TBLT method based on measuring the long lasting effect of teaching on the acquisition.

#### 1.5.1 Framework for TBLT

A well-known framework for TBLT is provided by Willis (1996), who identifies three stages. These stages are elaborated in Figure 1.

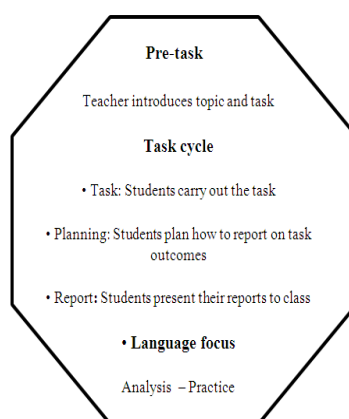


Figure 1. A framework for TBLT (Willis, 1996, p. 52)

#### 1.6 Challenges within the Saudi Context

According to Ellis "in teaching contexts where teachers and students are used to traditional approaches it would be unwise to make a sudden and total switch to TBLT" (2015, p. 383) hence this study is a small attempt to test out the suitability of communicative methodologies (TBLT and PPP) in this context. In fact, applying TBLT in EFL settings requires changes to the conventional roles for both teachers and learners (Carless, 2012). However, there are many challenges in the Saudi context arising from the implementation of TBLT and PPP such as the use of first language (L1), learner's motivation and classroom management. With regard to the use of mother tongue, the implementation of TBLT will minimize the use of L1 (W. Willis & D. Willis, 2007). Learner's lack of intrinsic motivation is another challenge, as learners want to pass their exams only. Classroom management was another challenge I faced in applying my pilot study as learners were sitting in rows and asking them to sit in groups was a real challenge because classrooms are not equipped for group work. Finally, Ellis (2015) argues that TBLT is not an alternative to traditional methods, but an adjunct to them. In support of Ellis' argument, it can be said that, using communicative methods alongside traditional methods is a demand in order to boost

learners' communicative competence.

## 2. Statement of Originality

This study will make an original contribution to classroom research by examining the effectiveness of different methods of teaching DMs in the Saudi EFL context. This study will thus differ from others in three respects: the location (a Saudi university), the context (EFL speaking classes) and the genre (presentation skills). In the Saudi context, to my knowledge this study is the first that investigates the effects of explicit teaching on the acquisition of spoken discourse markers in EFL speaking classes in Saudi Arabia. However, there are a number of studies investigating the use of DMs in writing skills by Saudi EFL learners, for example (Al-Yaari et al., 2012; Daif-Allah & Albeshir, 2013; Almakoshi, 2014; Alghamdi, 2014). However, this study will be different in finding out the use of DMs, then teaching them to two different groups using two different methods in order to find out which teaching methods work better on learners' spoken production. The research also has significance for the participants in the research, potentially raising the awareness of the EFL learners and the teachers on the importance of teaching/learning and using DMs and highlighting their structural function in discourse. Furthermore, I aim to contribute to the effort that has already been made in promoting and improving classroom research in the EFL context. It is also hoped that this research will contribute to the research fields in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, this study is a small attempt to make changes in teaching methods in this context which is based on helping learners to pass tests rather than helping them to be communicatively competent. As a result of employing traditional teaching methods (GTM and ALM), Al-Seghayer (2014) contends "There has been a rapid increase in the percentage of Saudi students who have failed to acquire competency levels in English" (p. 22). This study aims to be beneficial for EFL teachers, scholars, researchers and materials' designers.

## 3. Methods

The study aims to answer the following questions for the PhD stage:

- 1) To what extent does teaching DMs explicitly in the specific Saudi EFL higher education context assist students to use them effectively?
- 2) Which teaching method, PPP (inductive), PPP (deductive) or TBLT has a long-lasting effect on acquisition of DMs?
- 3) To what extent do Saudi EFL learners consider learning structural DMs via PPP or TBLT more effective than traditional teaching methods?

This is an experimental study and the first research question is raised to establish a baseline for the study by finding, which DMs Saudi learners use in their presentations in pre-test, post-test and delayed post-tests. The second research question is set to find out whether inductive teaching has a long lasting effect than deductive teaching. And the third research question is raised to gain an understanding of learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of learning DMs and teaching methods. The main aim for the pilot study is exploratory, as well as to obtain primary answers to research questions. The pilot study mainly aspires to answer the following questions for the MPhil stage.

- 1) To what extent does teaching DMs explicitly in the specific Saudi EFL higher education context assist students to use them effectively?
- 2) Which teaching method has a greater impact upon acquisition (PPP or TBLT)?

In order to answer the above questions the following hypotheses were created.

- 1) Teaching DMs will make a difference in learners' presentation production.
- 2) Teaching methods will have the same impact on learners' acquisition of DMs.

The pilot study seeks to explore which discourse markers Saudi EFL learners use in giving presentations in pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-tests. The reason for doing so is to examine the progress of learners' use of DMs throughout the whole teaching period to establish a baseline for the study. Additionally, by doing a comparative analysis between TBLT and PPP the study aims to find out which teaching method is more effective in this context and why. This study was carried out by collecting data from instructed classes. According to Timmis (2012), "if we take the view that applied linguistics involves the interaction of theory and practice, rather than simply the application of theory to practice, two further kinds of research will be useful: attitudinal research and classroom research" (p. 521). Hence, this study is an experimental study and consists of classroom research. For the aim of conducting a pilot study and answering the research questions at this stage, the main intention was to use a quantitative method. Dornyei defines quantitative method as, "quantitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data" (2007, p. 24). A mixed

methods approach will be adopted in the main study “to achieve fuller understanding of a target phenomenon” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 164), and to get more in-depth results and to enrich the statistical findings. For the purposes of this study, 41 female learners in the foundation program at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia were selected based on their language proficiency level (B2 or upper intermediate). Learners were divided into two groups: one group was taught by using Task-Based-Language-Teaching method, while the other was taught using the Presentation-Practice-Production model. Their age groups ranged between 18 and 20 years. Learners in both groups had a pre-course test, which is the Oxford Online Placement Test. So, based on the results of the tests, they were placed in upper intermediate (B2) classes. Having some learners who are lower than B2 level in the speaking skills is inevitable in language classes. Additionally, the B2 level is defined as ‘the independent user’ and learners at this level “Can understand the main ideas... Can interact with a degree of fluency... Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue ...” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24). The level of students is essential in drawing a strong and informative conclusion. The reason for choosing this specific level is based on Swan’s (2005) claim that TBLT is appropriate for advanced students, something that Carless (2009) supports, noting that “TBLT strategies are likely to be suitable for adult learners who already have substantial linguistic resources and need mainly to activate this language” (p.52). It can be said that TBLT is not appropriate for learners with low proficiency in English as they do not have the basic resources of English to do the tasks and participate effectively. The reason for choosing TBLT and PPP is to introduce Saudi learners to communicative learning methods. In this study, the implementation of both TBLT and PPP were different in that TBLT was taught inductively where learners are left to find out the target DMs by noticing the difference between their first presentation and the good model of presentation. While, deductive learning was used with the PPP model where learners were taught the DMs first and then applied these DMs in their presentations. With regard to the presentation tasks, TBLT groups were exposed to do the productive task before the receptive tasks. Furthermore, they had to finish all the task cycle then apply the DMs to their initial presentations (after doing the receptive task which contains target forms) while in the PPP model learners were taught deductively to do the receptive tasks before doing the productive tasks. (See appendix 3 for Sample lesson procedures for TBLT and PPP). The choice of participants was based on purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is the selection of particular participants (Dornyei, 2007). All the participants were at B2 level and were EFL learners in the foundation program in Saudi Arabia who were available at the required time to participate in this study (during their normal classes). The sample size as mentioned earlier was 41 students who were divided into two groups, following Dornyei (2007) recommendations. Students’ presentations (pre- and post-instruction) and (four weeks delayed-tests) were recorded and transcribed. The participants’ use of discourse markers was judged to be contextually correct. So, it needs to be ‘functionally’ correct in order to be counted. Fung and Carter noted, “the status of DMs need to be contextually referenced” (2007, p, 413). The transcripts of the presentations were analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics to establish the frequency of use of DMs and which DMs were used.

Two implications are drawn from the pilot study. First, in terms of the data, it is notable that the learners’ use of DMs increased from the pre-test to the post-test for both groups equally and decreased in the delayed post-test when compared to the post-test for both groups. Second, in terms of the teaching methods, both the TBLT method and PPP model helped learners in increasing the use of the target discourse markers equally in the short-term period. However, TBLT seems to work better in the long-term period in this context when compared with a deductive PPP model.

#### 4. Analysis

##### 4.1 Research Question 1

This question was raised to explore which discourse markers Saudi EFL learners use in giving presentations in English speaking classes (pre-test), an immediate post-test following the instruction were carried out to measure the effect of treatment on learning DMs, while conducting the 4 weeks delayed post-test aimed to find out the effect of treatment upon acquisition of the target DMs. The reason for doing so is to examine the progress of learners’ use of DMs through the whole teaching period. For this, group presentations were held and transcribed at three time points: pre-instruction, post-instruction, and 4 weeks post-instruction in order to find out “how many” from the target discourse makers do these students use in giving presentation. (See Appendix 1 for raw scores and the overall counts of DMs in pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test)

To answer the first research question, pre-test, post-test and delayed post-tests were performed and compared. It is clear that most of the DMs that Saudi EFL learners from the TBLT and PPP groups used in giving presentations in the pre-test stage were for sequencing function (e.g. first, second, then, next and finally), and for giving examples (e.g. like and for example). Additionally, the summarizing topic DM (so) was mainly used by

TBLT group (See Appendix 1). The use of DMs by TBLT was limited to first, second, finally, like, for example and so, while the PPP group used the DMs first, second, next, then, finally and like in the pre-test. To conclude, 11 DMs were used by TBLT group, whereas 13 DMs were used by the PPP group in the first Phase, known as pre-instruction. With regard to the post-test, it is evident that learners in both groups (TBLT and PPP) showed a significant improvement from pre-test to immediate post-test following the instruction of DMs. The overall count of the DMs used by TBLT group improved from 11 DMs in the pre-test, to 59 DMs in the immediate post-test, resulting in an increase of 48 uses. On the other hand, in the PPP group the overall count of DMs improved from 13 DMs in the pre-test, to 48 DMs in the immediate post-test resulting in an increase of 35 uses (See Appendix 1). Both groups used some DMs which were not targeted in this study, for example, “after that” and “such as”. In brief, both groups demonstrated a good increase in the usage of the target DMs from the pre-test to the post-test, while the greatest use of DMs was by the TBLT group. The delayed post-test (See appendix 1) was carried out 4 weeks after the treatment in which the TBLT group used 33 DMs, while the PPP group used only 11 DMs. Thus, the performance of the TBLT group was greater in the delayed post-test in comparison to the PPP group. So, the first null hypothesis of the pilot study which states that teaching DMs will make a difference in learners’ presentation production, is accepted.

#### 4.2 Research Questions 2

The purpose of the second research question was to ascertain which teaching methods have a greater impact upon acquisition (PPP or TBLT) and why. For this purpose, two independent-sample t-tests were performed. The reason for conducting t-tests was to compare the results of the independent groups (Dorneyi, 2007). The first independent-sample t-test was to investigate if the mean of the total scores of DMs were statistically significant i.e. pre-instruction, post-instruction, and 4 weeks delayed post-instruction. The second independent-sample t-test, was performed to investigate if the gain scores of DM were statistically significant difference between TBLT and PPP. Table 2 below shows the analysis results of the mean of the total scores of DMs.

Table 2. Analysis results of the mean of the total scores of DMs (N = participants. Sig = p-value for the t-test)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.
Pre-test	TBLT	20	.55	1.504	.336	.843
	PPP	21	.62	1.431	.312	
Post-test	TBLT	20	2.95	6.065	1.356	.341
	PPP	21	2.29	4.900	1.069	
Delayed-test	TBLT	20	1.65	3.558	.796	.002
	PPP	21	.52	1.167	.255	

It is apparent from Table 2 that there is an increase in the mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test in both groups’ performance. However, the TBLT group was slightly better in the post-test than the PPP group, and the overall mean for TBLT group improved rapidly from 0.55 to 2.95, whereas the mean for the PPP group improved from 0.62 to 2.29. Consequently, there is no significant difference in the usage of the DMs between the two groups. In the delayed post-test, the PPP and TBLT groups showed a decrease in the mean scores in comparison to the post-test, and the overall mean for TBLT group decreased from 2.95 to 1.65, whereas the mean for the PPP group decreased from 2.29 to 0.52. To conclude, TBLT scores in the immediate post-test and delayed post-test were better than the PPP group. So, based on the results of the first t-test, we conclude:

- There was no statistically significant difference in the mean of the total scores of DMs between PPP and TBLT in the pre-instruction phase at the 0.05 Level (sig = 0.843). The mean of the total scores of DMs was 0.05 for TBLT and 0.62 for PPP. If the p-value/sig is less than 0.05 of Levene’s test it leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis of equality of variances.
- There was no statistically significant difference in the mean of total scores of DMs between PPP and TBLT in the post-intervention phase at the 0.05 Level (sig = 0.341). The mean of the total scores of DMs was 2.95 for TBLT and 2.29 for PPP.
- There was a statistically significant difference in the mean of total scores of DMs between PPP and TBLT in the 4 weeks post-intervention phase at the 0.05 Level (sig = 0.002). The mean of the total scores of DMs was 1.65 for TBLT and 0.52 for PPP.

Table 3 shows the results of the second sample t-tests on investigating whether the gain scores of the DM was significantly different between TBLT and PPP and the change of the DM frequency counts was calculated as follows (the gain scores):

- Post-test  $\rightarrow$  pre-test = Total frequency counts of DMs in immediate post-instruction — Total frequency counts of DMs in pre-instruction.
- Delayed-test  $\rightarrow$  Post-test = Total frequency counts of DMs in 4 weeks delayed post-instruction — Total frequency counts of DMs in immediate post-instruction.
- Delayed-test  $\rightarrow$  pre-test = Total frequency counts of DMs in 4 weeks delayed post-instruction — Total frequency counts of DMs in pre-instruction.

Table 3. Analysis results of the gain scores of DM. N = participants. Mean = Gain scores. Sig= p-value for the t-test

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.
Post-Pre	TBLT	20	2.40	5.020	1.122	.188
	PPP	21	1.67	3.596	.785	
Delayed-Post	TBLT	20	-1.30	2.793	.624	.250
	PPP	21	-1.76	3.767	.822	
Delayed-Pre	TBLT	20	1.10	2.490	.557	.000
	PPP	21	-.10	.539	.118	

Based on the results of the second independent-sample t-test we can conclude:

- It is clear that the gain scores improved for both groups from the pre-test to the post-test but there was no statistically significant difference in the change of gain scores of DMs for the pre-instruction and post-instruction phases between PPP and TBLT at the 0.05 Level (sig = 0.188). The gain of DMs from the pre-test to the post-test was 2.40 for TBLT and 1.67 for PPP.
- It is clear that the gain scores from post-test to delayed post-test was not improved and there was no statistically significant difference in the change of gain scores of DMs for the 4 weeks post-instruction and post-instruction phases between PPP and TBLT at the 0.05 Level (sig = 0.250). The gain of DMs from the delayed post-test to the post-test was -1.30 for TBLT and -1.76 for PPP.
- It is clear that the gain scores from the pre-test to the delayed post-test decreased for the PPP group and increased for the TBLT group and as a result of that, there was a statistically significant difference in the change of gain scores of DMs for the 4 weeks delayed post-instruction and pre-instruction phases between PPP and TBLT at the 0.05 Level (sig = 0.000). The gain of DMs from delayed post-test to the pre-test was 1.10 for TBLT and -0.10 for PPP.

Thus, we can conclude that for the post-instruction and pre-instruction phases, there was no statistically significant change of DM usage between PPP and TBLT groups. For the 4 weeks delayed post-instruction and post-instruction phases, there was no statistically significant change of DM usage between PPP and TBLT groups. However, for the 4 weeks post-instruction and pre-instruction phases, there was a statistically significant change of DM usage between PPP and TBLT groups. The change of DM usage for TBLT group was greater than the change of the PPP group. Thus, TBLT had a better impact on the acquisition in the long term. To conclude, the second null hypothesis of the pilot study which states that teaching methods will have the same impact on learners' acquisition of DMs, is rejected.

## 5. Results and Discussion

The findings of the pilot study demonstrated that both TBLT method and PPP model, helped learners in increasing the use of the target discourse markers equally. This is evident in the immediate post-test following the instruction of discourse markers, which is affecting the improvement of the overall mean of targeted DMs and consequently affecting the gain scores from the pre-test to the post-test. In terms of the flow and coherence of learner's presentation, Fraser (1990) notes that DMs are highly beneficial guides for explaining the intention of the speakers in communication. It is apparent from the findings that the increase in the usage of structural



DMs from pre-test to the post-test showed that learners produced a more coherent presentations. With regards to the effect of treatment on learning the target DMs, it is notable from the results that learners in both groups (TBLT and PPP) are improving from the pre-test to the post-test which is as a result of practicing doing the tests many times and by different groups which Dorneyi referred to as “the practice effect” (2007, p. 53). Moreover, TBLT showed a slightly higher difference in the increase of the mean and the gain scores from the pre-test to the post-test like the PPP group, but statistically this is considered insignificant. It can be suggested that the similarities in the mean and gain scores between both groups in the post-test is due to the fact that learners are trying to apply the knowledge acquired in the lessons to their presentations. In brief, both the TBLT method and PPP model showed a great effect on learners’ learning of the target DMs.

To conclude, applying TBLT method in teaching DMs had a greater impact on learners’ acquisition of target DMs than PPP model which is evident from the results of the 4 weeks delayed post-test (TBLT’s overall mean and the gain scores of DMs were higher than the PPP group). Consequently, both TBLT and PPP influenced language learning positively. However, TBLT seems to work better in this context as the long-lasting effect appeared in the TBLT group. These are in line with what Carless (2009) noted “a key risk in P-P-P is that it is superficially attractive, but not leading to long-term acquisition of the target grammatical forms” (p. 64). The reasons why TBLT assists learners more than the PPP model might be due to the application of inductive teaching in TBLT method which helped learners notice the target DMs in the receptive tasks. McCarthy and Carter (1995) also state that “inductive learning might be more suitable than PPP model”. (p. 207). (Examples of the transcribed tests can be found in Appendix 2).

#### 6. Work to Be Completed Following Pilot Study

The pilot study data has been collected, transcribed and analysed. Thus, the main study needs to be completed. According to Dorneyi (2007), “over the past 15 years, mixed methods research has been increasingly seen as a third approach in research methodology” (p. 42). Quantitative and qualitative research methods will be employed in the main study to ensure that from both a theoretical and a practical perspective the study is as coherent and as comprehensive as possible.

Taking into consideration the findings of the pilot study the following changes will be made.

1) Apply mixed research methods (quantitative and qualitative). Using mixed method will help me as a researcher to draw a fuller picture on the importance of teaching structural DMs in this context and finding out the effectiveness of implementing communicative teaching methods based on the finding of both quantitative and qualitative measures. Using quantitative method will measure the overall use of the target DMs during all the stages (pre-instruction, post-instruction and 4 weeks delayed post-instruction). However, qualitative method will be employed in order to enhance the results from the quantitative method and to get more robust results (Schmitt, 2010). Qualitative method will be based mainly on interviewing selected students to participate in semi-structured interviews. Jones (2009) argues that to establish “... how effective a particular type of explicit teaching is ... we also need to ask the learners who are experiencing the instruction what they think about its effectiveness” (p. 87). Thus, ten students from each group will be selected and interviewed to gain an understanding of their perceptions of the effectiveness of learning DMs and teaching methods. The key reason for interviewing people is to find out the usefulness of studying and practicing DMs as well as finding out about the methodologies by doing a comparison with the grammar-translation method and asking students which is more effective and why. The reason behind this is to find out about learners’ thoughts about applying the TBLT and PPP and to consider how students use these DMs to structure their presentations and how using DMs affect their oral presentation in order to get more in-depth results. The interview transcripts will be analysed qualitatively to establish their views on the impact of the instruction on their presentation skills.

2) The pre-test, post-test and two delayed post-tests will be given. The main reasons for conducting these tests are: First, pre-test is used to find which DMs do EFL learners use in giving presentation. Second, Post-test will be conducted in order to find out the effect of treatment on learning DMs. Finally, two delayed post-tests will be carried out in order to find out the effect of treatment upon acquisition. Schmitt (2010) noted, “vocabulary learning is longitudinal and incremental in nature” (p. 156). Thus, in order to incorporate longitudinal research, one or more delayed post-test should be added to the study design (Schmitt, 2010). Hernández (2013) argues that a second delayed post-test is important in measuring learner’s knowledge of the new DMs. Scores on immediate post-test drop when measured on a delayed post-test. This means, interpreting the post-tests scores as a short-term learning while delayed post-test as a long-term learning (Schmitt, 2010). With regard to the length of the delayed post-test, Schmitt (2010) stated “no standard period of delay” exists? (P.156). I will follow Schmitt’s suggestion “any delayed post-test of less than one week is likely to be relatively uninformative” and “a delayed

post-test of three weeks should be indicative of learning which is stable and durable" (2010, p.157). So, the first delayed test will be 4 weeks after instruction and the second delayed post-test will be 6 weeks after the instruction.

3) The focus will be on group presentations in order to measure the learning and the acquisition of DMs in order to draw a strong conclusion about which teaching methods work better in this context (English as a foreign Language).

4) Increasing the treatment groups to three groups (inductive TBLT, inductive PPP and deductive PPP). The pilot study found that Inductive TBLT works better in this context than Deductive PPP. Comparing inductive and deductive teaching is an attempt to find out whether or not applying inductive teaching has a long-lasting effect on learning DMs than deductive teaching. The teaching period will be the same as the pilot study (ten hours) for each group over two weeks. Norris and Ortega (2001) identified the length of treatment as follow: short treatment lasted for less than two hours while long treatment lasted for three hours or longer. It can be said that, the treatment in this study will be a long treatment, as it will last for 10 hours. In addition, the number of participants will be 20 in each group as was in the pilot study and as recommended by Dornyei (2007). The reason behind the length of treatment (ten hours) is, from my experience in the pilot study, that it is maximum hours teachers would allow me to access their classes, otherwise they are going to fall behind the schedule as they explained to me in the pilot study. So, it is hoped to get teachers' cooperation in accessing their classes for two hours for five days spread over one or two weeks.

5) The target structural DMs in the main study will be the same as the pilot study.

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**Appendix 1** raw scores:**Pre-test usage of the target structural DMs: TBLT and PPP groups (Pilot study)**

Groups	Sequencing					Opening conversation				Closing conversation		Giving examples		Topic shifts					Summarizing topics		Overall counts for each group
	First	Second	Next	Then	Finally	Right	Now	Ok	Let's start	Ok	Right	Like	For example	Well	So	Now	Let's turn to	Let's move on to	To conclude	So	
TBLT Groups	3	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	11
PPP Groups	4	2	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13

**Post-test usage of the target structural DMs: TBLT and PPP groups (Pilot study)**

Groups	Sequencing					Opening conversation				Closing conversation		Giving examples		Topic shifts					Summarizing topics		Overall counts for each group
	First	Second	Next	Then	Finally	Right	Now	Ok	Let's start	Ok	Right	Like	For example	Well	So	Now	Let's turn to	Let's move on to	To conclude	So	
TBLT Groups	4	4	4	3	4	4	0	4	4	2	2	4	3	3	1	2	3	3	3	2	59
PPP Groups	4	4	3	3	4	4	1	3	2	1	2	3	0	1	2	1	1	3	3	3	48

**Delayed Post-test usage of the target structural DMs: TBLT and PPP groups (Pilot study)**

Groups	Sequencing					Opening conversation				Closing conversation		Giving examples		Topic shifts					Summarizing topics		Overall counts for each group
	First	Second	Next	Then	Finally	Right	Now	Ok	Let's start	Ok	Right	Like	For example	Well	So	Now	Let's turn to	Let's move on to	To conclude	So	
TBLT Groups	4	4	2	1	3	1	0	1	2	1	3	4	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	33
PPP Groups	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11

**Appendix 2** Examples of the transcribed tests (Pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test) (student errors have not been corrected).

**Topics:**

- **Pre-test** (what makes a good home)
- **Post-tests** (1. five things you would like to change in our society, 2.planning a party, 3.fashion, 4.marriage in Saudi culture and finally 5.online shopping).
- **Delayed post-test** (what is your favourite places)

PPP group (Group A)

Pre-test

Good morning. We will present about what makes a good home. **First**, It should have five five bedrooms, three bathrooms and a big dining room with many with big table with chairs...)

Post-test (Lesson one, Sequencing DMs)

We would like to talk about five things we would like to have in our society. **First**, traffic in the roads because all people want to arrive at the time...)

Delayed post-test

Hi Ladies, how are you Today I am going to talk about three fun places in Madinah. **First**, uh I like the Baskin Robins, it is the ice cream it is really delicious, and it has many flavours **like** chocolate...)

PPP group (Group B)

Pre-test

Good morning, today we are going to present design for our houses. **First**, first, uh first outside the home there is a big courtyard erm on the right side there is a swimming pool with with seats...)

Post-test (Lesson two, opening and closing topics DMs)

**Right**, in this weekend we would like to go to the sea. **Ok**, in the beginning we should buy all the things we need it like food, swimming balls, toys, umbrellas...)

Delayed post-test

Welcome everyone, I am Majidh and these are my friends Rana, Noha and Eman. We will speak about our best places in my city. **First**, Movenpick Water Park...)

TBLT group (Group C)

Pre-test

Good morning everyone, today our presentation will talk about what makes a good home. Home is the place we where where we live. **So**, it should be comfortable. **First**, the good home should have a lot of rooms...)